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# Essays on Strategy

Hostage Rescue Planning  
Maritime Theater Nuclear Capability  
Strategic Psychological Operations

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# Essays on Strategy

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## FOREWORD

The essays in this volume won recognition in the 1984 Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategy Essay Competition. Beginning in 1982, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has challenged the students at our Senior Service Schools each year to develop new strategies for national security. Original, innovative thinking, rather than traditional research and reporting, is the goal. The students have met the challenge well. Each year's best essays have brought fresh perspectives to old problems, raised new questions, offered solutions.

This volume contains three essays. Lieutenant Colonel Richard F. Brauer, Jr., US Air Force, considers the requirements for successful planning of hostage rescues, specifically reviewing the Son Tay raid, the *Mayaguez* crisis, the Entebbe rescue, and the Iranian hostage rescue attempt. Commander Raymond E. Thomas, US Navy, looks at the US Navy's capability for maritime theater nuclear warfare, identifying problems and recommending improvements. Colonel Melvin E. Kriesel, US Army, finds the United States lacking a national-level mechanism for coordinating military psychological operations and proposes a way to remedy the problem.

The National Defense University conducted the judging of the essay competition and is pleased to publish these outstanding selections. Addressing topics of importance in today's international environment, they contribute to the intelligent debate of national security issues.



**Richard D. Lawrence**  
Lieutenant General, US Army  
President, National Defense  
University

# Essays on Strategy

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1  
**PLANNING FOR  
HOSTAGE RESCUE MISSIONS:  
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION**

by

Richard F. Brauer, Jr.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard F. Brauer, Jr., US Air Force, is a navigator. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Boston University and a Master of Arts degree from Troy State University. He recently served as Chief, Air Operations Division, Operations Directorate, I-3, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Lieutenant Colonel Brauer is a 1984 graduate of the Army War College.

Hostage rescue operations are like icebergs. Occasionally, after a brilliant success or a dismal failure, we momentarily glimpse the very tip of the berg; because of operational security and sensitivity requirements, we seldom see the other nine-tenths of the operation. However, in today's world of mass media, with rapid proliferation of the spoken and written word, the iceberg analogy applies only temporarily. It's only a matter of time before we get all the details of an attempted or completed hostage rescue mission. As soon as word of the aborted US rescue attempt in Iran on 25 April 1980 hit the news media, dozens of journalists, congressional committees, defense analysts, political candidates, and armchair strategists began to expound on the inadequacy of the planning effort, the mistakes in execution, and the reasons for failure. Though some of these individuals raised valid criticisms of the operation, I contend that most can never fully appreciate the enormity of the task at hand until they have actually participated in the planning for such an operation under the many inevitable constraints.

The purpose of this essay is to give the reader a better appreciation of hostage rescue operations in general and particularly the planning imperatives behind these operations. To do this, I will critically examine four attempted or completed hostage rescue operations: the Son Tay raid (November 1970), the recovery of the *Mayaguez* (May 1975), the Entebbe raid (July 1976), and the Iran rescue mission (April 1980). I will not emphasize what transpired during the operations themselves, for this is a matter of historical record. Instead, I will concentrate on the thought processes and preparation that went into these missions, searching for similarities, differences, and lessons learned that can be applied in planning future operations.

## FOUR RESCUE MISSIONS

### The Son Tay Raid

The first of the operations, chronologically, was the raid (code name "Kingpin") on the Son Tay prison compound approximately 23 miles from Hanoi, capital of North Vietnam, on 21 November 1970. The mission of the 56-man heliborne assault force was to rescue 61 US prisoners of war (PWs) believed to have been held captive there. Planning for the raid began six months before the actual assault. During the planning period the rescue force secretly rehearsed the primary assault plans and several backup plans. On the evening of 20 November, the rescue force, including 105 aircraft from five air bases in Thailand and three aircraft carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin (for diversionary airstrikes), launched. All forces were to converge on their respective targets in what was to become the most extensive night operation of the Southeast Asia conflict.<sup>1</sup>

After a grueling 340-mile, air-refueled flight, the assault force successfully landed in the Son Tay compound at 2:18 A.M. (local time) on 21 November. They found the prison camp empty. Despite a firefight with what appeared to be about 200 Chinese or Russian troops as a result of a helicopter inadvertently landing in a wrong location, total friendly casualties for the operation were one slight wound and a broken ankle. Estimates of enemy dead vary between 100 and 200. After only 27 minutes on the ground at Son Tay, the force successfully withdrew to recovery bases in Thailand.

Though the tactical plans were meticulously executed, the mission was considered a failure, primarily because of a major intelligence oversight. Later information revealed that the North Vietnamese had removed the PWs from the Son Tay camp some four-and-a-half months earlier because of persistent flooding in the area. Ironically, the flooding most likely had been caused by "Operation Popeye," a covert US cloud seeding and weather modification experimental program in the region.<sup>2</sup> To some Americans the Son Tay raid became yet another manifestation of the US failure in Vietnam. To others, the mission became a symbol of hope for eventual recovery of all Americans listed as PWs

and missing in action (MIA). In any case, a major positive effect of the mission was that it forced the North Vietnamese to consolidate American PWs, thus "liberating" many prisoners from years of isolation and near isolation.

### **The *Mayaguez* Rescue**

The *Mayaguez* incident occurred during the period 12-15 May 1975. Unlike the Son Tay rescue operation, which had been carefully planned and executed in the utmost secrecy by special operations forces, the recovery of the US merchant ship SS *Mayaguez* was conducted by conventional military forces in an open, ad hoc, crisis-response environment.

The *Mayaguez* (the first fully containerized ship in the US merchant fleet) had been en route from Hong Kong to Sattahip, Thailand, with a cargo of commercial items including food, clothing, medical supplies, and mail. On the afternoon of 12 May 1975, in the vicinity of Poulo Wai Island, approximately 60 miles southwest of the Cambodian port of Kompong Som, naval forces of the Cambodian revolutionary government fired upon and boarded the *Mayaguez*, seized the vessel and its 40-man crew, and headed toward the Cambodian mainland. During the next three-and-a-half days, the United States mounted a major joint military assault and recovery operation against Cambodian communist forces on Koh Tang Island, another island, 30 miles north of Poulo Wai, where the *Mayaguez* lay anchored and its crew was believed to be held prisoner. US Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force personnel and assets were involved in the assault. In addition, retaliatory air strikes were conducted against Ream airfield on the Cambodian mainland. On 15 May the *Mayaguez* was recovered intact and the Cambodians returned the ship's crew to US custody, but not without cost.

Another intelligence failure had grossly underestimated the Cambodian military forces and weapons on Koh Tang Island. US casualties in the assault were high, with 18 killed and 50 wounded. Eight helicopters were lost in action on or near Koh Tong Island and one crashed in Thailand en route to the crisis area, which accounted for an additional 23 dead. Regardless, prompt and decisive action by the Ford administration had resulted in the

### Hostage Rescue Planning

successful recovery of the ship and its crew and a concomitant boost in America's self-image. The incident did, however, refocus congressional attention on the 1973 War Powers Resolution, which affects the president's ability to commit US military forces in crisis situations.

### The Entebbe Rescue

The Entebbe operation of 4 July 1976 was originally code-named "Thunderbolt" and later renamed "Operation Jonathan" after Lieutenant Colonel Yonni (Jonathan) Netanyahu, commander of the Israeli assault force, who was killed in action during the rescue mission.<sup>3</sup> The renaming of the operation reflected an overwhelming feeling of gratitude on the part of the Israeli people. The Entebbe rescue was similar to both the Son Tay and *Mayaguez* operations. As in the Son Tay mission, operations security (OPSEC) and the need for absolute secrecy were driving forces in the Entebbe operation; as in the *Mayaguez* crisis, time was of the essence.

The crisis began on 27 June 1976 when Air France Flight 139, en route from Tel Aviv to Paris via Athens, was skyjacked by 10 Palestinian terrorists (of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). The terrorists took the plane, via a refueling stop in Libya, to Entebbe airport in Uganda. Facts surrounding the skyjacking indicate a high degree of complicity on the part of Ugandan President Idi Amin. In exchange for the passengers, the skyjackers demanded the release of terrorists being held in Israel, France, Switzerland, Kenya, and West Germany. The skyjackers threatened to kill the passengers and blow up the aircraft if the deadlines for their demands were not met. Some non-Israeli hostages were released, but 93 passengers and 12 airline crew members remained captive.

Shortly after the aircraft had been hijacked, Israel secretly placed commando forces on alert, drew up preliminary plans for a rescue attempt, and began conducting training exercises and rehearsals. After the terrorists issued a second ultimatum, the rescue force, consisting of four C-130 transport aircraft loaded with assault teams, took off on 3 July 1976 from Tel Aviv and quietly landed at Entebbe airport shortly after midnight on 4 July. Within

minutes, seven of the terrorists had been eliminated and it is believed three were taken prisoner for later interrogation. Only 53 minutes after the rescue force landed at Entebbe, the 102 surviving hostages were en route to Israel via a refueling stop in Nairobi. Total ground time for the operation was 90 minutes. Casualties included three civilian hostages killed, five civilians wounded, one officer killed, and four soldiers wounded (one seriously). Israel and the rest of the world deemed the raid an unquestionable success. It became a model to be emulated, in part, by the planners of the Iranian rescue attempt.

### **The Iranian Rescue Attempt**

The Iranian hostage crisis began on 4 November 1979 when Iranian militants seized the US embassy in Teheran. The incident began an extremely difficult period for both the Carter administration and the American people. During the 444 days until the 53 hostages were released, President Carter listened to myriad proposals for freeing them, including the use of nuclear weapons against Iran. At presidential direction, preliminary planning for a rescue operation began only two days after the embassy was taken.<sup>4</sup>

"Eagle Claw" became the code name of the operation to free the hostages, with "Rice Bowl" the code name for the planning phase of the mission.<sup>5</sup> The final plan was, of necessity, extremely complex and demanding. Time, distances involved, and the location of the hostages were major obstacles.

The plan was for three US Air Force troop-carrying MC-130 Combat Talons (C-130s configured for special operations) and three EC-130s configured for ground-refueling to depart from the island of Masirah, off the coast of Oman, and fly to a site in Iran's Dasht-e Kavir desert, code-named "Desert One," some 200 miles southeast of Teheran. At Desert One, the force would await the arrival of eight Navy RH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters (flown by Marine pilots) from the carrier *Nimitz* in the Gulf of Oman, 600 miles from the rendezvous site. On arrival, the helicopters would refuel from the EC-130s and a specially trained US Army assault team of 90 men would board the helicopters. Soon after they began working, the mission planners determined that an absolute

#### Hostage Rescue Planning

minimum of six flyable helicopters would be required to lift the assault force and its equipment from Desert One to the next location. If this criterion was not met, the mission would have to be aborted at Desert One. (The number of helicopters used in the operation was to become a key issue of debate long after the rescue attempt had failed.)

Once the helicopters had refueled and the assault force was loaded on board, the helicopters would proceed to hide sites—one for the assault team itself and one for the other helicopters, in the vicinity of Garmsar. The C-130s would return to Masirah. Virtually all operations were to take place under cover of darkness. The assault team would eventually be met by Department of Defense (DOD) agents who had been placed in Teheran several days before. After a series of covert link-ups, the team would be provided a number of Mercedes trucks that had been stored in a warehouse on the outskirts of Teheran. The team would split into three elements and use the trucks to position themselves for an assault on the embassy compound.

Once the tactical assault plan had been executed and the hostages freed, the helicopters, orbiting north of Teheran, would land in the vicinity of the compound (or in nearby Amjadieh soccer stadium, if the compound was blocked). The helicopters would fly the hostages and assault team to Manzariyeh airfield, thirty-five miles to the south, which was to be seized and secured earlier by US Army Rangers. When the assault force and hostages reached Manzariyeh, they would board US Air Force C-141 aircraft and fly to a friendly country.

As the world learned on the morning of 25 April, the president ordered the mission aborted at the Desert One site after equipment failure left the assault force with less than the six helicopters determined by mission planners to be required for successful execution of the rescue operation. Of the six helicopters that finally arrived at Desert One, after an extremely difficult flight through an unforeseen local weather phenomenon known as a *haboob* (a dust cloud of suspended particles), only five were determined to be flyable—one less than the minimum number required to proceed. One helicopter was forced down en route to Desert



One by an indication that a rotor blade was about to fail. A second helicopter lost its navigation and flight instruments and returned to the *Nimitz*. A third helicopter suffered hydraulic failure at Desert One and was judged to be unsafe for further flight. After direct consultation with the on-scene commander via secure satellite radio communications, President Carter cancelled the mission.

As the entire force prepared to withdraw from Desert One to their recovery bases, one of the helicopters, which was changing position to allow a second helicopter to refuel, collided with a C-130 and both aircraft burst into flames. Eight crewmen (three in the helicopter and five in the C-130) died in the fire. Because of the intense heat, exploding ammunition, and impending daylight, the remainder of the force evacuated the Desert One site, leaving behind the bodies of the eight men in the burning wreckage and the five remaining operational helicopters.

President Carter announced to the American public at 1:00 A.M. (Washington time) that an attempt to rescue the hostages had been made but that the mission had failed. Costs of the failed mission included eight dead and several seriously wounded. In congressional testimony, the monetary cost of the attempt was estimated at around \$193 million.<sup>6</sup> An additional cost that cannot be measured in absolute terms was the damage to the United States' reputation for military skill and power. In all fairness to the brave men who took part in the rescue attempt, just plain bad luck had as much to do with the failure as any oversight in planning or execution.

## RESCUE MISSIONS IN GENERAL

### The Rescue Mission as a Political Act

Rescue missions differ from conventional military operations in wartime in that the motives behind rescue missions are distinctly and expressly political. The national leadership is solely and ultimately responsible for ordering the planning and execution of such missions. The rescue mission is, as Clausewitz characterized war, an extension of politics by other means.<sup>7</sup> Unlike

## Hostage Rescue Planning

conventional military operations, rescue missions are expected to be accomplished flawlessly, with all hostages recovered alive, no casualties incurred by the rescuing force, violence directed solely against the captors, and the political situation left no worse than it was before the rescue attempt.<sup>8</sup> In other words, hostage rescue missions are unreasonably expected to be perfect.

The preferred solution to any hostage crisis is negotiation, since this approach does not risk casualties unless the captors begin selective or indiscriminate execution of their hostages. Negotiation buys time, allows additional intelligence gathering, and provides a means for covering rescue preparations. Military preparation and training for a rescue operation must take place *simultaneously* with negotiations in case an emergency assault is required.

Closely tied to the notion of the rescue mission as a political act is the fact that the mission is also an expression of national will. During the *Mayaguez* crisis, the Ford administration sought to avoid another loss of respect and "face" such as resulted from the US reluctance to use force in a swift and decisive manner in the 1968 *Pueblo* incident. President Ford felt that the seizure of a US vessel and its crew by a country (Cambodia) which had so recently caused the United States embarrassment was a very serious matter. Secretary of State Kissinger was emphatic about the need for a forceful response and felt that the United States should send a strong signal to North Korean President Kim-Il Sung and other communist Asian leaders. Kissinger believed that the issues at stake went far beyond the isolated seizure of a US merchant ship on the high seas to questions of international perceptions of power and US national will.<sup>9</sup> Kissinger feared that if the Cambodians used the *Mayaguez* crew the way the North Koreans had manipulated the crew of the *Pueblo*, the American political posture in the rest of Asia could radically deteriorate. The *Mayaguez* crisis pointed out the need for the United States to act promptly to dispel doubts concerning US national will and capacity to respond to provocation. President Ford "felt it would be far better to take strong action even though the odds might be against us. It was far better than failing and doing nothing."<sup>10</sup>

The aggressors in a hostage crisis, whether they be representatives of a totalitarian communist government, leftist militants, or a group of terrorists, have selected their victims as a symbol of the government or system which they hope to embarrass politically or eventually overthrow. Immediately after the skyjacking that led to the Entebbe rescue mission, Israeli Transport Minister Gad Yaakobi pointed out to the task force formed to deal with the situation that the terrorists' target was, indeed, the nation of Israel.<sup>11</sup> The decision to go ahead with the Iranian hostage rescue attempt was clearly tied to national will. Critics of that decision stated that President Carter let public opinion drive him toward the military solution. As one critic phrased it, "he decided to ride the tiger."<sup>12</sup> Other observers, including the president's closest advisers, saw the raid as a means for Carter to politically demonstrate his courage to act decisively as the Chief Executive and to bolster world opinion of American power.<sup>13</sup> On 11 April 1980, at a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC), the president made his final decision to proceed with the military option. As his National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, so aptly phrased it, Carter decided to "lance the boil of American frustration."<sup>14</sup>

The element of time is often critical in planning rescue operations. In the case of the Son Tay and Iranian rescue missions, time was available to adequately plan the mission and choose the time and place of execution. But during both the *Mayaguez* and Entebbe operations, time was critical if lives were to be saved and national prestige restored. Both these latter crises highlighted the need for in-being, workable crisis-response mechanisms within the governments involved. The *US Joint Staff Officers' Guide* defines a crisis as

an incident external to the continental United States that develops rapidly and creates a condition of such diplomatic, political, or military importance to the US government that commitment of US military forces is contemplated to achieve national objectives.

Resolution of crises is therefore vital to US national objectives and national strategy and usually time constrained. In the case of the

## Hostage Rescue Planning

Entebbe rescue, a carefully tailored crisis management team was formed only two hours after the first intelligence reports of the skyjacking. Teams of specialists from various military, political, and diplomatic organizations supported each member of the crisis task force. Only four hours after President Ford was notified of the *Mayaguez* seizure, the National Security Council held the first of many meetings to discuss an appropriate response to the situation.<sup>15</sup>

## Rescue Forces

At this point let us briefly discuss the type of forces that are appropriate for conduct of most hostage rescue operations. I contend that special operations units are best suited for conducting such operations. I base my argument not on any false elitist pride, but on the fact that the individuals within these units have developed—through natural inclination, operational experience, or training—a particular mind-set that is essential for survival. Special operations, since their origins in the days of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), have been small in size, covert or clandestine by nature, and imaginative by necessity or design. During such operations the chances of success are small, the uncertainties are great, and the odds on getting killed are even greater. The use of special operations forces might be compared to the “quiet use of a surgical knife” as opposed to use of a “big stick.”<sup>16</sup>

The Israelis historically have assigned special operations missions to their commando units. US special operations forces include US Army Special Forces (Green Berets); Navy Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) Teams; and US Air Force special operations units. Unfortunately, throughout the history of these units and their predecessor organizations, each of the Services has displayed an inherent distrust of these nonstandard, so-called “elitist” units. Therefore, these units have suffered, as would be expected, from low personnel promotion rates and benign neglect in the fiscal support arena. Some progress has been made in this latter area as a result of rising national interest in the United States’ ability to respond to global transnational terrorism.

Training and equipment are important to special operations personnel, but imagination and ingenuity are paramount. Colonel

Charlie Beckwith, leader of the assault force in the Iranian rescue attempt, described special operations as a "rare and exotic bird."<sup>17</sup> The ability to improvise and use standard equipment in nonstandard ways becomes critical when funds are lacking, time is short, and operation security dictates avoiding routine supply channels. The Son Tay raiders were particularly adept at using Sears Roebuck catalogues to obtain ideas and rough specifications for a host of mission-peculiar items that would be needed on the raid.<sup>18</sup>

Israeli Major General (retired) Shlomo Gazit, Director of Military Intelligence from 1974 to 1979, a participant in the planning for the Entebbe raid, portrayed the special operations mindset when he stated that the planner for a rescue operation requires "the mentality and expertise of a bank robber."<sup>19</sup> Both planners and operators in this field must be attentive to detail, extremely aware of the need for precise timing in the conduct of operations, and willing to accept unusual orders and missions without question. The motto of the US Air Force 1st Special Operations Wing says it yet another way: "Anytime. Anyplace."

### Goals and Risks

Before attempting a rescue mission, planners must define success; assess the risk; and determine political, operational, and technical feasibility. Definitions of success vary from mission completion with no friendly casualties to partial rescue with an "acceptable" number of losses, whatever that figure may be. In attempting to define success for the Son Tay raid, planners considered what retaliatory measures the North Vietnamese would take against those prisoners left behind in other PW camps. The planners generally accepted that the North Vietnamese would not make reprisals against PWs who had nothing to do with and were probably unaware of the raid.

The Israelis decided they had to attempt the Entebbe rescue at all costs, even though they viewed the odds for success as small because of the great distances involved and the lack of information about the terrorists. The deciding factor for the Israeli government was when the terrorists began a "selection" process

#### Hostage Rescue Planning

among the hostages, separating Jews from non-Jews, which appeared ominously reminiscent of Dachau and Buchenwald.

For political reasons previously discussed, the US government defined success in the *Mayaguez* crisis as rapid recovery of the ship and its 40-man crew. This recovery was achieved at a cost of 41 Americans killed, 50 wounded, and millions of dollars worth of military equipment lost. Some would say the true measure of success was a restoration in the eyes of the world of US stature as a highly capable military power.

Mission success can be defined in many ways. As a result of the "failed" Son Tay raid, all US PWs were relocated to Hanoi. Many who had been isolated for years were now confined with other prisoners, where they could support one another by communicating and organizing. The PWs' morale soared and they generally felt the raid demonstrated that the United States had not forgotten them. Most importantly, the raid struck a blow against the psyche of the North Vietnamese, leaving them with a feeling of vulnerability. As Colonel "Bull" Simons, assault leader in the raid, stated, "Christ, the thing was worth doing without getting them." <sup>20</sup>

In addition to defining success and assessing political risks when contemplating rescue missions, planners must carefully assess the operational and technical feasibility of the plan. The lack of one flyable helicopter at Desert One changed the course of history. Whether the plan for the assault on the embassy would have succeeded or resulted in disaster, the world will never know.

Planners for the Iran mission determined a 96.5 percent probability that six of the eight helicopters would arrive at their hide site in a flyable condition. The addition of two more helicopters would have boosted that probability to 99.2 percent, but also would have required another fuel-carrying C-130, increasing the chances of detection and mechanical failure. The decision was made to accept the lower probability of success and use only eight helicopters.<sup>21</sup> Many critics have argued, after the fact, that a failure to conduct a serious operational analysis, considering all the various phases of the rescue plan, predestined the failure of the

Iran rescue operation. According to Dr. Stefan T. Possony, Associate Editor of *Defense and Foreign Affairs*, using eight helicopters in the "Eagle Claw" operation produced a 0.3 probability of overall success; increasing the number of helicopters to 18 would have increased that probability to 0.9.<sup>22</sup>

Political considerations can heavily influence the technical aspects of a rescue plan. President Carter believed the number of helicopters (eight) deemed necessary by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) was appropriate since he wished to present this mission to the world as one with humanitarian overtones, not as an act of war against Iran. The point is that the planning process must balance hard requirements dictated by operational analysis with those dictated by availability of equipment, additional risk factors, and political considerations.

As alluded to earlier, special operations rescue missions historically have had low probabilities of success. Early in the planning for the Iran rescue attempt, JCS Chairman General David Jones asked Colonel Beckwith about the probability of success and the risks. Colonel Beckwith replied, "Sir, the probability of success is zero and the risks are high."<sup>23</sup> Carter's Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, was totally convinced that the plan would not work and that any attempt to conduct a rescue would result in considerable harm to both the rescue force and, ultimately, the hostages. Vance stressed the need for continued negotiation through State Department channels and expressed concern about an adverse Soviet response to the raid. He resigned his post in protest following the mission's failure.

Vance's resignation was yet another political "price" the Carter administration had to pay. The Iranians were quick to exploit for propaganda purposes the equipment, sensitive documents, and (sadly) the human remains left behind at Desert One. The technical failure of the mission dealt a heavy blow to the psychological well-being of the United States and sounded the political death knell for the Carter administration. The president bore sole political responsibility for the failed mission. The lesson is that when planning for success one must also prepare for failure. Rescue missions are inherently high-risk ventures.

## Hostage Rescue Planning

Planners must analyze the implications of failure at both the tactical and strategic levels and be prepared to accept the consequences of failure. This is particularly true for special operations missions, which have high visibility throughout the world and which often, despite their small size, can shape perceptions of the United States as a world power.

Historically, special operations missions have failed much more than they have succeeded. This is not to say, however, that the reasons behind them were not cogent enough to warrant their attempt. An average of at least three out of four commando, British intelligence, and OSS operations in the European theater during World War II were considered failures. French special operations in Indochina and Algeria did not seem to fare any better. The Son Tay raid was, by no means, the first such PW rescue attempt in Southeast Asia, but actually the 71st "dry hole"! Between 1966 and 1970, 91 such PW rescue attempts were conducted in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Of the 91 attempts, 20 succeeded, recovering 318 South Vietnamese soldiers and 60 civilians. Forty-five of those raids were mounted for the purpose of rescuing American PWs; however, only one was successful, recovering one US Army Specialist Four (who died 15 hours after his liberation, of wounds inflicted by his captors before the rescuers arrived).<sup>24</sup>

## Lessons from Experience

Planners of rescue missions repeatedly use historical precedents in their planning. The chief value in studying history is the lessons it teaches for the future. In 1968 the USS *Pueblo* was captured by the North Koreans; 82 American sailors were incarcerated for 10 months. The United States painfully learned that the possibility of rescuing the ship and crew was reduced to zero once the ship reached harbor in North Korea. When the *Mayaguez* crisis unfolded in May 1975, President Ford lost no time in committing military forces to prevent the ship from being taken to a Cambodian port. The *Pueblo* "lesson" was not wasted on the Ford administration. Negotiation is one avenue of release, and it must be pursued simultaneously with tactical mission planning. However, in maritime crises such as those cited above,



history has taught us that the best time to resolve the crisis militarily is immediately after it occurs.

Planners for the Entebbe operation carefully studied lessons learned during the Son Tay raid. They were continually plagued by doubt and "planner's remorse" that the rescue force would strike and find no hostages at the airport, as the Americans had experienced at Son Tay some six years earlier.<sup>25</sup> After having executed one of the most successful commando raids in history, Israel was quick to offer to the Carter administration the benefit of lessons learned in the Entebbe rescue. President Carter initially opted to pursue negotiation instead, but he soon set the wheels in motion to plan a US rescue operation.<sup>26</sup>

### Captors and Captives

Once the political decision is made to plan a rescue mission, the first step should be to examine the characteristics and capabilities of both the captors and the captives. In both the Son Tay and Mayaguez operations, the captors were conventional military personnel (guards and soldiers); in Iran, the captors were militant students. However, for this discussion I will refer to the captor as the "terrorist" and the captive as the "hostage."

Knowing not only the size but also the type of terrorist group involved is important in that the larger, transnational groups have well-known, historically documented *modi operandi*. Transnational terrorist groups are state sponsored and have political objectives that clearly transcend national boundaries.<sup>27</sup> Ascertaining group composition is equally important. Are there any women or varied nationalities within the group? The ten terrorists that seized Air France Flight 139 in the Entebbe crisis were led by a German couple of remarkably different personality types.

Other important essential elements of information (EELs) for rescue planners are the number and kinds of weapons, explosives, or boobytraps the terrorists possess; the probability that the terrorists will carry out any threats; and the types of demands they are likely to make. Terrorists today are becoming increasingly sophisticated. High technology can provide them enhanced

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capabilities in communications and counter-surveillance. Among the most important and difficult to ascertain information is that regarding the terrorists' states of mind and their actual intentions. (An odd axiom of terrorism is that, historically, if hostages are not killed in the first few days after their capture, they probably never will be, and they eventually become a burden to their captors.)

During the Entebbe crisis, non-Israeli passengers released before the assault were able to provide planners with much of this essential information. Rescue planners should actively seek inside sources of information whenever possible. Although this type of intelligence is usually the most difficult to obtain, it is often the most critical to the final assault phase of the operation.

In studying the objective, planners must consider the number and composition of the hostage group as well as the captors. The presence of women, children, clergymen, or important persons may dictate the type and level of violence the assault force will use. The ethnic composition of the hostage group must also be considered, since the rescuing force, when it reaches the hostages, will probably issue commands such as "Lie down!" or "Remain still!" in only one language. In the Entebbe raid, a soldier in each squad used a loudspeaker to shout commands to the hostages to lie down. Those who remained standing stood a chance of being either deliberately shot or caught in a crossfire.

Rescuers can expect hostages to behave unpredictably, especially after long months of incarceration. Over time, positive relationships may develop between the captives and the captors. This phenomenon is often referred to as the "Stockholm Syndrome," so named after a Swedish bank robbery incident in 1973 in which the hostages began to identify with the bank robbers and became sympathetic to their plight. During the Entebbe crisis, the male German terrorist leader, very much unlike his female partner, adopted a pleasant manner. Many of the hostages considered him quiet and even affable; others were not so easily deceived.<sup>28</sup> Planners must be aware that basic human needs compel the hostage to see the human qualities in his tormentor. The planners must adjust their assault plans accordingly.

A good rule of thumb regarding hostage behavior during the assault phase is to "expect the unexpected." Some may freeze, faint, or scream; others will run. The most difficult to deal with and most dangerous to himself is the hostage who heroically tries to assist the rescuers by seizing a terrorist weapon, thereby putting himself in peril.

A visible symbol, such as an American flag on the assault uniform, or a spoken familiar word or phrase (the Israeli commandos at Entebbe shouted "Israel") will do much to instantly make the hostage realize the rescue is taking place around him. During planning for the Iranian rescue, Colonel Beckwith requested permission from President Carter to use the phrase, "The President of the United States has sent us."

## PLANNING IMPERATIVES

I contend that planning for any hostage rescue operation must consider three basic principles, two of which are classic principles of war. They are *speed*, *simplicity*, and *surprise*.

Speed in responding to a crisis situation requires recognition that a crisis exists. During the *Mayaguez* incident, a Navy reconnaissance aircraft launched for on-scene surveillance only two hours and twenty minutes after the National Military Command Center received the initial report of the seizure of the ship.<sup>1</sup> Speed in planning and execution is paramount since windows of time or meteorological or climatological considerations may restrict a planned operation to certain periods. In addition, terrorists are vulnerable during the first hours of a hostage situation because they often have not had time to sufficiently organize shift schedules and surveillance plans. The Son Tay planners were conscious of the need to execute the raid before the monsoon season; planners for the Teheran raid were aware that any delay in execution would exclude use of helicopters because impending high summer temperatures in the Iranian desert would cause loss of aerodynamic lift.

Simplicity in a plan is highly desirable but very often difficult to achieve. There is a measure of elegance in simplicity. The

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simpler the plan, the fewer things can go wrong. (In philosophy, Occam's Razor states that in choosing between two similar hypotheses, the simpler is preferred.) During the *Mayaguez* affair, no less than five different options were presented by General Jones, then Acting JCS Chairman. Planning for the Iran rescue attempt yielded a considerably greater number because of the difficulties involved. The tendency is usually to provide too many options. In addition to seeking simplicity with regard to both numbers and complexity of courses of action, forces should be kept as small as the situation will allow. Larger forces mean greater logistic requirements and more chance for compromise of the mission. There is an Israeli Defense Force adage that says, "Lean forces fight best."<sup>31</sup> It is also axiomatic that during the planning for any mission of this type, the size of the rescue force *will* grow, as more difficult planning problems are encountered.

The final basic principle, and the single most critical element the planner must strive for, is surprise. The Soviets consider surprise one of their basic principles of military art. Stevens and Marsh define a surprise as "an event which comes to be known, and perhaps understood, almost exclusively after it has happened."<sup>32</sup> In an assault operation, the element of surprise, used in concert with violence and speed, is the critical element and the *sine qua non* on which the lives of the hostages depend. Loss of surprise should nearly always be cause for a decision to abort the mission.

Inherent in planning for surprise is the element of deception, which can be defined as the deliberate misrepresentation of reality to gain competitive advantage. The Soviets do not assign deception status as a separate principle of their military art because they consider it interdependent with surprise. Of the rescue operations discussed in this essay, all but the *Mayaguez* rescue had deception schemes as part of the basic plan. During the Son Tay raid, fire-fight simulators were airdropped to distract, confuse, and demoralize the North Vietnamese; diversionary Navy air missions dropping flares were flown over Haiphong harbor to divert attention away from the sector of the prison camp; US Air Force F-105 Wild Weasel electronic warfare/defense suppression aircraft were used to jam enemy radars and as "bait" to divert surface-to-air missile (SAM) defenses away from the assault force.

A valid criticism of the naval air diversion in the Son Tay mission is that for some time before the event, the Navy had virtually stopped airstrikes in the vicinity. The caution here is that an overly elaborate ruse can arouse suspicion and become counter-productive to the primary mission. The most important criterion for a deception scheme is *believability*. The planners should lead the enemy to believe what he is predisposed and preconditioned to believe.

The Israelis used deception to the maximum at Entebbe. Two of the C-135 (Boeing 707) support aircraft used in the raid were painted with El Al airline colors and made to appear, both inside and out, to be commercial aircraft. The occupants wore civilian clothes and carried bogus identification documents. One aircraft was, in fact, a completely equipped airborne command post for the Israeli Air Force commander; the other was configured for medical evacuation and was to stand by to meet the assault force in Nairobi on its way home from Entebbe.

The most publicized deception scheme in the Entebbe raid was the black Mercedes Benz sedan carrying a burly Israeli paratrooper in black make-up, made to look like Idi Amin. The Mercedes preceded the Israeli convoy of Land Rovers as they rolled off the C-130s and rapidly carried the assault force to the old terminal building where the hostages were held. The Israelis determined correctly that the Mercedes was the official car and a symbol of authority in Uganda and would be allowed to pass security points without question. The Ugandan guards fell for the ruse and sounded no alarm.

Lastly, the Iranian rescue plan included the use of deception. Before the rescue attempt, the United States increased the frequency of C-130 flights in and out of Egypt as well as the number of night helicopter sorties from the carrier *Nimitz*. These actions were part of a conditioning mechanism in the larger deception plan.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Need for Intelligence**

Timely and accurate intelligence is the element in a rescue operation that ultimately determines the difference between

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success and failure, between victory and humiliation, and between saving lives and losing them. *Detailed* last-minute intelligence is the hallmark of successful special operations missions. Every possible source for this type of information must be actively sought and utilized. Just before launch of the Iran rescue mission, a cook from the embassy in Teheran was permitted to leave the country. By mere chance, a CIA agent discovered the cook's release and learned from the cook that the 53 hostages were all together in one location—a vital and hitherto unknown piece of intelligence, which was relayed to the assault force commander and caused considerable change in the assault plan.<sup>22</sup>

Because human beings are predisposed to believe what they want to believe, last-minute intelligence very often is looked upon with suspicion, for it will no doubt require changing the plan. Planners and operators ultimately reach a point where they want to go with the final plan as it was rehearsed, for there is comfort in familiarity. Approximately 24 hours after the deploying Son Tay raiding force had received the execute message (they had not launched on the final assault phase yet), the mission commander received word that a Vietnamese stay-behind agent in North Vietnam, classified by intelligence sources as "usually reliable," had reported that the prisoners had been removed and the camp was empty. Lingering doubts about the reliability of the agent and conflicting information from overhead infrared imagery caused the commander to execute the raid as planned.

Another key lesson learned in the Son Tay operation was that what appears on an aerial photograph is not necessarily the reality of the moment. The rescue plan called for one helicopter to purposely crash-land between two small, spindly trees shown on SR-71 photographs. In the time between the last reconnaissance mission and the raid, the trees grew considerably. The helicopter pilot that was to crash-land had to adjust his approach during the final moments to avoid what would have been fatal contact with two huge trees.

The best and most reliable intelligence will nearly always be human intelligence (HUMINT), human eyes on the target. The seizure of the embassy in Teheran in November 1979 left the CIA

without a single stay-behind agent in the country. Not until late December was an agent, identified as "Bob," finally reintroduced to provide critical on-scene intelligence. The next best thing to these inside sources, or "invisibles" as the Israelis refer to them, "are people with previous experience in the objective area. Before the Entebbe assault, the Israelis interviewed Idi Amin's former personal pilot and the former Israeli attaché to Uganda, because both were intimately familiar with the layout of the Entebbe airport.

Weather reconnaissance is a form of intelligence especially crucial to a plan involving use of air or maritime assets. Before the Son Tay raid, aerial weather reconnaissance flights were flown along the border between Laos and North Vietnam because of the increasing threat of an approaching typhoon and associated cloud systems, which could have jeopardized the mission. For the Iranian rescue attempt, planners decided against a weather reconnaissance flight to avoid the risk of arousing suspicion and possibly compromising the mission. As it turned out, had a weather ship been flown (or had the rescue force used secure radio communications between the helicopters and the C-130s ahead of them, already approaching the clear conditions at Desert One), helicopter number five probably would have continued on through the weakening suspended dust phenomenon (*haboob*) without instruments instead of returning to the *Nimitz*. I believe that where aircraft are concerned and the weather is in doubt, weather reconnaissance flights are usually worth the risk, especially in areas where enemy signals intelligence (SIGINT) capabilities are known to be weak.

Intelligence failures are often attributed to the fact that worst-case scenarios are ignored or only partially believed. As a rule of thumb, planners should consider "Murphy" an optimist. During the *Mayaguez* crisis, estimates of enemy strength in Koh Tang varied from 18 Cambodian irregulars with their families to a Defense Intelligence Agency estimate of 200 Khmer Rouge soldiers armed with automatic weapons, mortars, and recoilless rifles. The Defense Intelligence estimate proved very accurate; however, the 175-man strength of the Marine assault force was predicated on an enemy strength estimate of between 20 and 100 lightly armed

troops.<sup>37</sup> The decision to use the low estimate resulted in considerable loss of life and equipment.

My final point regarding the processing and evaluation of intelligence is that the planners must establish one central point of collection and collation. This central point should gather all types of intelligence, including visual imagery from manned and unmanned overhead collection systems, human intelligence, and signals intelligence. This multiplicity of sources will provide planners a means of cross-checking information to determine both accuracy and timeliness.

### **Security Considerations**

Operations security (OPSEC) must be religiously maintained during all phases of the mission. Operations security literally means the difference between getting to the objective undetected and compromising the mission. There are as many ways to ensure operations security as there are ways to compromise it. During final planning and preparation for Operation Jonathan (Entebbe), everyone associated with the mission, including high-level Cabinet ministers, was cautioned to avoid doing anything out of the ordinary that could arouse suspicion. Mission personnel travelled in civilian clothes and used private and commercial rather than military transportation to move to debarkation points.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of maintaining operations security is determining to what degree the operation and associated planning will be compartmentalized. Determining who should know and what they should know varies depending on the operation, the political sensitivity of the mission, and the guidance from the governing authority. Training of the assault force, itself, is an OPSEC threat. When various types of units are brought together for the first time, it clearly signals that something unusual is in the making. Cancelled personnel leaves and passes, interrupted or cancelled unit social and athletic events, and prolonged absences of key personnel in the unit command structure all suggest impending military action.

The planners of the Son Tay operation considered operations security paramount. They felt that the more people who knew about the mission, the greater the risk of compromise. As a result,



access lists were kept small and the mission was highly compartmentalized. Personnel at Strategic Air Command (SAC) headquarters who were responsible for reconnaissance missions over North Vietnam did not know what they were trying to photograph. SAC personnel later stated that knowledge of the exact requirement (pinpoint target location rather than area coverage) would have helped them get the desired photo coverage.<sup>39</sup>

With regard to Son Tay, virtually the entire staff directing the war in Southeast Asia was kept in the dark concerning one of the most critical operations ever launched in that theater. The commander of the Pacific Fleet, who was ultimately responsible for the Navy air diversion operation, was never told of the reason for it, though the commander of Carrier Task Force 77 was eventually briefed before the raid. Security requirements were so stringent that even the men of the assault force were not told of their mission until airborne and en route to their final staging location. Three days before the raid, only four key people in the ground force knew the target and details of the mission.<sup>40</sup>

The Son Tay planners and operators routinely disassembled the training mockup of the Son Tay camp before daylight and when the Soviet Cosmos satellite was projected to be overhead. Yet another OPSEC scheme in the Son Tay operation was to employ US counterintelligence teams during all phases of the operation to see if they could break the code and determine mission details and objectives. Though the counterintelligence units were only partially successful, a young intelligence officer in the Evasion and Escape Branch of Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces, eventually determined, quite by accident, the mission objective and precise target. First, he noticed the upgrading in security classification of requests for photo reconnaissance over a certain area of North Vietnam. Then a request for a medical evacuation aircraft configured to accommodate the exact number of prisoners thought to be held at Son Tay confirmed his suspicions.

How well operations security is truly maintained can only be determined after mission execution. Planners for the Teheran rescue attempt, like the Son Tay group, placed operations security above all other considerations. The commander of the Joint Task Force (JTF) assigned to the mission was selected not only because

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he was an extremely capable officer and already assigned to the Pentagon, but also because selection of any high-visibility combat unit commander would have aroused undue suspicion and speculation.<sup>41</sup> Only the Carter administration's top-level personnel were aware of the mission, to include the Vice President (Mondale), Secretary of Defense (Brown), Secretary of State (Vance), National Security Advisor (Brzezinski), Director of the CIA (Turner), and White House Chief of Staff (Jordan).<sup>42</sup>

Following the aborted raid, the Holloway Commission critiqued the JTF effort in a formal report covering 23 separate issues regarding planning and execution. OPSEC (issue number 1) criticisms were that —

- Planning may have been too compartmentalized, thereby inhibiting the flow of information between players.
- The lack of a full dress rehearsal involving all participants, because of perceived security risks, resulted in some operational problems that occurred on the mission not being identified.
- The extreme emphasis on the need for communications security (COMSEC)—an essential element of operations security—during mission execution resulted in a lack of coordination between mission air crews, which could have enhanced their capability to handle unforeseen emergencies.

The Holloway report concluded that “slightly greater selectivity and flexibility in the OPSEC arena, particularly within the JTF, could have been beneficial in operational terms without necessarily sacrificing security.”<sup>43</sup>

The bottom line regarding operations security is that it must be maintained at all costs; however, the degree to which measures are taken to ensure this is strictly a judgment call. A given cost in decreasing OPSEC measures is an increased probability of operational compromise. The Iranian experience showed that operations security must not become an obsession. OPSEC requirements and the need for secrecy must be carefully balanced with operational requirements (such as joint training) necessary to

accomplish the mission. There is no simple formula or solution for OPSEC success.

Security regarding special operations rescue missions is almost as important after the operation as during and before it. The United States historically has been weak in this area. Too much light on the mission details can imperil the use of sensitive techniques and equipment in future missions. In both the Son Tay and Iranian missions, the planners intended to never reveal that the operations were unsuccessful, if that was how they turned out. Ideally, to preserve operations security, mission personnel should adhere to the principle of silence. But in the open American society, and given the nature of congressional and media inquiry, silence and total secrecy are probably unrealistic goals.

### **The Planning Process**

The planning process itself for a mission such as a hostage rescue is unique in many ways. Before planning begins, an agreed upon, limited (for OPSEC purposes) number of people from requisite specialties need to be collocated in a central planning cell, where they can exchange views face-to-face. The nature and urgency of the crisis will dictate both the speed of the selection process and the tempo of the planning effort. Expertise in one's field is, of course, a basic requirement for a planner. In addition, a planner should have a personality and temperament that enable him to cope with a rapidly changing and dynamic situation.

Once the planning cell is formed, the planning process must allow for easy exchange of ideas and information as well as clear channels of communication and coordination. The group must encourage brainstorming and free-wheeling; the planners cannot consider any idea too implausible until they fully evaluate it. Hostage rescue operations depend wholly upon the element of surprise to achieve success. The maximum employment of imaginative concepts provides the key to that success. Frequent changes to the basic operational concept are the rule in this type of planning effort. Planners must resist the urge to choose one course of action and stick with it for expediency's sake. They must refine or radically change the basic plan as necessary to maximize the chances

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of mission success. One way to avoid the "groupthink" mentality is to initially establish independent planning teams and isolate them from one another.<sup>11</sup> These teams can then formulate independent plans, which can be evaluated later as to operational acceptability, feasibility, and suitability.

Planning should proceed from the general to the specific. The central planning unit should concentrate on the general concept of the operation while the unit commanders are left unimpeded to formulate detailed tactical execution plans. In the interest of time, operational units should train, prepare, and rehearse simultaneously with the general planning effort. During crises, immediate, "no-plan" assault options should be devised in the event that the captors begin hostage executions.

Early involvement of political authorities at the highest levels is necessary for establishing rules of engagement and discarding politically unacceptable ideas at the outset of the planning effort. Mission planners must also take into account international law and world opinion. Diplomatic negotiation is the preferred method of obtaining hostage release; however, a dual-track approach, simultaneously considering a military option, is always prudent. In many cases, as with the Entebbe operation, negotiation can also deceive the captors into believing that the diplomatic channel is the only recourse open to the "hostage" government.

An important element of the planning process is what has come to be known as the "what-if drill." Once the basic plan is formulated, the planners should examine it in the light of all imaginable contingencies, taking into account possible and probable technological and human failures. Planners must try to "think the unthinkable." Although anticipation of every possible contingency is an admirable goal, experience has shown this can never be truly achieved. Alexander Scott asserts that the Clausewitzian "fog of war" is five times as thick for special operations such as hostage rescue missions and, therefore, the chances of failure, five times as great.<sup>12</sup> The mission planners should use the what-if drill, as a thought process, continually as they develop the basic plan. Before formal acceptance of a particular plan, a separate review group (frequently referred to as a "murder board")

should independently review the plan, playing the "devil's advocate." The Israelis used an "officer's rap session" for just such a purpose before the raid at Entebbe.<sup>46</sup>

The what-if drill can determine the need for alternate and backup plans. The number of these plans, in keeping with the principle of simplicity, should be kept to an absolute minimum. The Son Tay planners developed four backup plans in addition to the primary assault plan. As it turned out, the second-in-command effectively used alternate Plan Green when the lead assault helicopter, carrying the tactical mission commander, landed in the wrong location. In cultivating a mind-set that enables the planner to formulate backup plans, it is often helpful to anticipate the worst in every situation. If something has not been planned for, it almost certainly *will* happen during mission execution.

In airborne rescue operations, especially those involving helicopters, history has taught us that cross-loading of key personnel and equipment among the aircraft to accommodate various backup plans is a planning imperative. Failure to cross-load helicopters is an invitation to disaster. During the *Mayaguez* operation, one of the first helicopters shot down at Koh Tang contained every available radio belonging to the Marine command and control and fire support group. The loss of those radios greatly hindered subsequent tactical operations.<sup>47</sup> During the Iranian attempt, the number five helicopter, which aborted en route to Desert One and returned to the *Nimitz*, carried all the spare parts for the remaining mission helicopters.

Destruct plans for sensitive, disabled, or purposely abandoned equipment are another essential sub-task. The assault helicopters for the Son Tay rescue were fitted with explosives and detonators. As a safety precaution, electrical initiators were placed apart from the explosives and the electrical leads were left disconnected. When the time came to destroy one helicopter, according to plan, the initiators were connected to the explosives and a built-in timing device allowed the rescue party to clear the area. To further reduce the possibility of technical failure, Colonel Simons ordered that dual fuses be installed in the helicopter to be destroyed. Failure to destroy the five abandoned helicopters at

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Desert One in Iran resulted in the loss of the aircraft themselves and the loss of classified documents and photographs.<sup>38</sup> The Iranians used these items for propaganda to embarrass the Carter administration.

The failure of the Iranian rescue attempt highlights yet another important planning consideration. Mandatory abort and go-no go decisions must be built in at key points in the tactical plan. After the mishap at Desert One, investigation revealed that the force had never anticipated nor practiced aborting the mission at that point and loading the C-130s for return to bases. The mission planners, though they anticipated many contingencies (such as the arrival of a busload of Iranians), apparently never considered that an abort order might be necessitated at so late a point in the operation.

Unfavorable events are not the sole cause of changes to the original plan. Fortuitous circumstances can also dictate the need for flexibility. During the final Entebbe planning, the plan called for ground refueling of the C-130 aircraft at Entebbe during the operation. At the last minute, a shift in the "political winds" allowed refueling at Nairobi, Kenya, on the return route to Israel. This change in circumstances called for a last-minute, but propitious change of plans.

Proper selection of the assault force can help produce flexibility in planning and execution of the mission. Special operations missions of this type are, by their nature, *joint* operations. Planners must insist, however, on tailoring the assault force to mission requirements without regard to Service composition. Hostage rescue operations are an emotional experience for everyone involved. Some people involved in the planning for the Iranian mission felt that JCS members wanted to make sure each of the Services had a "piece of the action."<sup>39</sup> As a result, Marine helicopter pilots were used where perhaps Air Force pilots would have been more suited for the mission.

The issue (number 12 in the Holloway Report) was certainly not which Service had the more capable pilots. But the facts were that during the training period, the Air Force had 114 qualified H-53 pilots, instructors, and flight examiners, of whom 96 were

current in long-range flight and aerial refueling. Most importantly, 86 of these Air Force pilots had recent special operations experience.<sup>30</sup> Although the Navy had the helicopters (RH-53s) with the appropriate mission capabilities, the Air Force had the pilots with the requisite special operations background to fly them, given only a brief period of transition training. History has shown that experienced pilots can adjust far more easily and quickly to a different aircraft than an inexperienced pilot can train for a new and highly complex mission.

This issue of pilot selection for the Iranian mission merely illustrates the point that Service parochialism has no place in the planning and conduct of hostage rescue missions. An equal share of the glory and credit to each of the four Services should never be considered a requirement of the rescue operation. In the final analysis, the hostage couldn't care less what uniform or insignia his rescuer wears. Conflict and competition between Services (and individual organizations within those Services) inhibits effective planning; it must be recognized for what it is and held in check.

Logistic support requirements for missions of this type will vary from scenario to scenario; however, the requirements are always demanding, not so much in a quantitative sense but because of the types of equipment that may be required. OPSEC requirements dictate that routine supply channels be avoided and exigencies of the mission require a supply priority code of the highest order. During planning and training for the Son Tay raid, the unit supply section quickly became saturated with requests and supply personnel had difficulty in reacting promptly to sudden equipment requirements. A dedicated, fully manned, centralized supply section armed with blanket authority, preferably in writing, is highly recommended. Another highly useful technique is to have sufficient cash funds on hand to allow immediate purchase in the local economy of items hard to find through normal supply channels.

Medical planning is a particularly important aspect of rescue missions. As a general rule of thumb, casualties and hostages should be loaded on the first aircraft to leave the objective location. At Entebbe, the Israelis used doctors and medical orderlies trained as combat troops to provide an on-the-scene emergency

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medical capability. These personnel arrived on the second of the four C-130s to land at Entebbe. The doctors and orderlies were able to treat the five civilian and four military casualties almost immediately in that aircraft, which had been configured with operating tables and full hospital equipment.<sup>31</sup>

The planners for the Entebbe raid also positioned a similarly configured C-135 aircraft at Nairobi, Kenya, for emergency treatment of an expected total of 85 casualties. In sum, medical planning must include provision for on-the-spot treatment of wounds resulting from gunshots, explosives, and fire, as well as treatment of shock and trauma. A surgical capability is highly recommended, especially where availability of aircraft permits an airborne hospital for treatment while en route to permanent medical facilities.

## Command, Control, and Communication

Thorough command, control, and communications planning for hostage rescue operations is, like the element of surprise, absolutely critical to mission success. The ability to communicate both within the assault force and to the command authorities is more than essential. Even during the brief 10-year span of the four rescue operations discussed in this paper, the impact of quantum technological advances in communications can be seen. In the Son Tay raid, Colonel Simons and his men carried 92 radios into the objective area—almost as many as a standard infantry battalion possesses. The mission personnel were assessed as being able to communicate nearly 12 times better than the average soldier.<sup>32</sup> During the *Mayaguez* crisis, the National Security Council knew of the Cambodians' firing on the Navy P-3 reconnaissance aircraft within 20 minutes of the incident. The Israelis used their second C-135 as an airborne command post near Entebbe to provide a communications link between the ground force commander and national leaders.

Development of satellite communications has thrust us into what General T.R. Milton (US Air Force, retired) has described as the era of "His-eye-is-on-the-sparrow" command and control.<sup>33</sup> Key US policymakers have extended their command and control (and communications) in various crises down to the lowest



tactical level. This situation might at first seem undesirable to a tactical commander. But in a fast-breaking hostage crisis, the political authorities need to be in constant (secure) communication with the assault force to relay the latest diplomatic or political developments and intelligence findings, or even to intervene and cancel the mission if necessary. The ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of a hostage rescue mission rests with the highest political authority, not with the military.

The principles of centralized command and control and decentralized execution are equally valid for hostage rescue operations. The political leader must not attempt to make tactical decisions for his assault force commander. President Carter decided to abort the Iranian rescue attempt only after the senior military officer on the ground at Desert One recommended doing so. Similarly, during the Entebbe operation, the assault force commander made the tactical decisions. During both operations, as long as the operation proceeded according to plan, the national authorities were to remain silent.

During an operation of this nature, planners naturally tend to try to increase the number of reporting requirements so they can follow the progress of the operation. A concerted effort should be made to keep the number of these reports down to an absolute minimum. A recommended technique is to develop an "execution checklist" of numbered events, with each event described and assigned a code word that would indicate successful completion. Events which must happen for the plan to succeed are designated "mandatory"; all others are "non-mandatory" or optional. The assault force would report on non-mandatory events only if they did not occur, and then only if non-occurrence would seriously impair chances of mission success.

The political authority, overall mission commander, and tactical assault commanders must agree upon those events to be reported and thoroughly brief all mission personnel of these requirements. "What-if" events and alternate tactical plans would also be assigned code words, to be reported only if they occurred or were used. A system such as this provides brevity and speed in reporting and allows key personnel to follow critical events in the assault operation.

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Lines of command during these operations must be streamlined and relatively simple to insure unity of command. The command lines for the Entebbe operation ran from the political-ministerial crisis action team to the Chief of Staff, Israeli Defense Forces (Lieutenant General Mordechai Gur), and from General Gur directly to the Task Force commander, with no intervening agencies.<sup>34</sup> This command and control structure facilitated a political-military interface, increased information flow, and enhanced secrecy.

During the Iranian crisis, the chain of command ran from President Carter to the Secretary of Defense (Brown), to the JCS Chairman (General Jones), to the Joint Task Force Commander (Major General Vaught). However, the Holloway Report found that from the Task Force Commander downward, command channels were "fuzzy" and less well defined in some areas, only implied in others. Even among the planners and mission forces, who was in charge of what aspect of training and what mission responsibility was not always readily apparent. Only 12 days before mission execution, and for no apparent reason (although he had recent experience in Iran), a new deputy commander of the Joint Task Force was designated. My point is that a sound organizational structure is necessary, with clear and streamlined command channels that mission personnel readily understand. Planners must not allow rigid compartmentalization and OPSEC requirements to interfere with or have an adverse effect on one of the basic principles of war—unity of command.

The importance of both comprehensive mission briefings and full tactical rehearsals cannot be overemphasized. To meet OPSEC requirements, the United States paid the price in preparation for the Iranian rescue attempt. Planners for the operation decided that security requirements overrode the need for a full dress rehearsal involving all of the mission forces. Training exercises were performed by individual units at widely separated locations. Though an admittedly much smaller and less complex operation, preparation for the Entebbe raid involved a complete rehearsal by all the Israeli forces on the night before the actual operation. Comprehensive, joint mission briefings, including at least key personnel from all the units, are a planning imperative.

These briefings should take place as close as possible to the time of the actual operation so they can include last-minute intelligence, final changes or refinements to plans and procedures, and evaluations of critical mission data such as weather and flight conditions. Coordination and communication should be continuous throughout the planning cycle, but are especially critical for the final briefing before mission execution.

Both before and during the operation itself, other than direct verbal means can be used to further facilitate communication and coordination. Planners can devise mission briefing and equipment checklists to ensure that no key mission area is left open to question and no critical item of equipment is left unchecked. Recognition codes and light signals become important in areas where radio communication must be kept to a minimum or engine noise or rotor blast may inhibit direct verbal communication.

Personnel recognition is important, especially during night operations. During the Entebbe raid, Israeli forces wore white hats (similar to US Navy caps) with brims down, enabling the personnel to quickly identify one another in the dark and the confusion of the assault.<sup>55</sup> Each member of the assault force for the Iran attempt wore an American flag on the right shoulder of his assault clothing, covered with tape to be removed before entering the embassy compound. This identification was primarily for the benefit of the hostages rather than the assault force personnel. Darkness and dust and noise from the C-130 engines and helicopter rotor blades made face-to-face communications on the ground at Desert One during the out-loading operation all but impossible. Devices such as neon, color-coded arm bands might have aided in recognition of key personnel and should be considered for use by planners of similar operations in the future. Personal recognition devices would also help distinguish recovered hostages from assault force personnel when personnel must be accounted for under conditions of duress.

Once the operation is completed, lessons learned need to be captured and recorded as soon as possible. A record of past experience is critical to the success of future operations. Special operations personnel are as subject to the vagaries of the personnel system as the rest of the military community. Normal

## Hostage Rescue Planning

personnel rotation and retirement will result in an inevitable corporate memory loss. Of immediate importance following a successful operation is the debriefing of both mission personnel and hostages as to the sensitive details of the operation and what may and may not be discussed. Following the Entebbe raid, the Israelis debriefed the hostages at an Israeli Air Force base before flying them to Ben Gurion International Airport to face the media.<sup>56</sup> This type of planning forethought not only allowed Israeli mission commanders an opportunity to protect sensitive operational techniques and procedures, but also permitted an occasion to leak stories for deception purposes.

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Based on historical trends, a decrease in the number of incidents of hostage-taking and transnational terrorism is highly unlikely. Rather, an increase is likely. The United States presently has 282 embassies and diplomatic posts staffed with almost 14,000 Foreign Service personnel in 144 host countries around the world.<sup>57</sup> To expect that terrorists will continue to actively target this population, as well as senior US military officers and government officials, is reasonable. Many nations, reeling under the impact of their own internal terrorist threat, have formed organic counterterrorist (CT) units to deal with the problem. Many have called for the formation of an *international* counterterrorist agency to deal with the global aspects of highly organized and state-sponsored transnational terrorism. To my knowledge, this organization has yet to be formed. In the interim, however, national CT units have joined together to exchange ideas and techniques for combating the problem.

The facts of the rescue missions discussed in this paper cry out for the formation of a US counterterrorist task force with an effective crisis management structure, capable of responding rapidly to terrorist incidents anywhere in the world. This force would require a multitude of capabilities, a high degree of readiness and training for selectively assigned personnel, and the funding and equipment needed to carry out its mission. Suffice it to say, we have such a force. The days of the ad hoc unit, thrown together to deal with a particular crisis, are over. Yet the basic problems facing the military planner still remain.

I have touched upon numerous planning imperatives in this paper. But I have only scratched the surface of the problems that will have to be overcome. Each scenario will be different and will dictate its own unique set of imperatives. Service parochialism will continue to haunt the most joint of planning efforts as long as the Services compete for scarce fiscal resources. The challenge to military planners will be to put aside petty interservice rivalries and take up the gauntlet thrown at our feet by the specter of transnational terrorism.

In my opinion, with the formation of these national CT organizations we have reached a watershed in the fight against the malignant disease that is terrorism. Like cancer, however, terrorism will be with us for some time to come. The hostage rescue operation is but one stroke of the surgeon's knife. We must never fail to try. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt,

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat.<sup>58</sup>

2

**MARITIME THEATER  
NUCLEAR WARFARE:  
MATCHING STRATEGY AND CAPABILITY**

by

Raymond E. Thomas

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Maritime theater nuclear warfare (MTNW) between the United States and the Soviet Union is a subject of increasing concern in American strategic dialogue. This concern is centered on the growing recognition that MTNW capability and strategy are crucially important to the US Navy's ability to defeat the Soviet Union at sea. Ultimately, the success of the United States' overall national warfighting strategy quite possibly hinges on the US Navy's capability to deter or win a nuclear conflict at sea.

The United States is now at a critical juncture in developing its naval force and formulating its strategy. The US Navy is in a difficult situation: it lacks the force structure to achieve its stated objectives. The first step in the renovation process is to recognize the very real potential for fighting a naval conflict in the nuclear arena. Because it lacks a comprehensive, pervasive offensive force, the US Navy cannot choose the level of hostility. An analysis of the US Navy's theater nuclear capability reveals significant deficiencies when compared with Soviet capability and intentions.

### SOVIET CAPABILITY AND STRATEGY

Since World War II, the Soviets have transformed their navy from a primarily defensive, coastal force to a modern, potent force capable of projecting naval power and influence around the globe. The Soviets' sea-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) force is large and at the leading edge of technology, and it is a cornerstone of Soviet global nuclear strategy. The conventional and theater nuclear warfare forces of the Soviet Navy are increasingly impressive in terms of size, capability, and usefulness in smaller scale



#### Maritime Theater Nuclear Capability

conflicts (below the "Armageddon" level). The Soviets have built a multifaceted conventional and theater nuclear force consisting of attack submarines, long-range strike aircraft, and surface forces employing well-engineered cruise missiles. This force is tailored to counter and neutralize Western naval forces. Today, the Soviet Union possesses over 700 threat platforms capable of launching over 2,000 antiship, conventional or nuclear cruise missiles. The increase in sophistication and size of the Soviet force continues.

The fundamental Soviet maritime strategy in a major super-power confrontation appears to be sea denial. Because the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) fleet is the most valuable component of Soviet naval forces, it will be deployed where the full range of protective measures can protect it. Therefore, the SSBN fleet will launch SLBMs from within a protected perimeter near the home waters of the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> Because of this strategy, the majority of Soviet surface units will be assigned to protect Soviet SSBNs from Western attack submarines. As they approach the sea denial area, US and Allied surface naval forces will confront primarily cruise missile-firing submarines and long-range strike aircraft. At the same time, the Soviets will conduct a more limited but, nonetheless, formidable campaign to interdict sea lines of communication (SLOC), primarily using attack submarines. Choke points will be controlled with mines, high-speed patrol boats, long-range aircraft, and land-based antiship missiles.<sup>3</sup>

Along with these strategic considerations, several operational characteristics of the Soviet Navy are noteworthy. Soviet surface and subsurface units are not designed to sustain extended high-tempo operations.<sup>4</sup> The Soviet Navy does not have a significant capability for replenishment and rearming at sea. Magazines in major combatants are relatively small. In a major conflict, weapons stocks would be depleted quickly. Neither logistics support capability nor equipment reliability appear to favor protracted campaigns. Soviet naval strategy therefore stresses the necessity of winning a short, decisive naval conflict.<sup>5</sup> Admiral Gorshkov's "battle of the first salvo" is the keynote of the Soviet strategy.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps even more significantly, the Soviets do not view deterrence and escalation in the same light as strategists in the United States do. The Soviet military speaks of fighting and winning war at all levels, including the expectation that both sides will eventually use nuclear weapons.<sup>7</sup> Soviet commanders expect to be able to use the most efficient means at their disposal to win a conflict with the Western nations. Deployed Soviet units are assumed to carry a roughly equal mix of conventional and nuclear weapons.<sup>8</sup> Soviet efforts to improve wartighting capability across the full range of nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare indicate that the Soviets are preparing to fight and win conflicts at any level of escalation.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to some US strategic thinking, it appears that the Soviets do not expect warfare to be conducted below certain prespecified thresholds.<sup>10</sup>

### US FORCE STRUCTURE AND COUNTERING THE SOVIETS

The navies of the Western maritime nations (most significantly, the US Navy) match up well against only the lower levels of Soviet naval capability and strategy. The US Navy, in particular, places a large share of its maritime warfare capability in its potent "carrier battle groups" (CVBGs), centered primarily around 14 large-deck aircraft carriers. This US emphasis appears to be partially the result of warfare tradition and experiences in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.<sup>11</sup> The continued reliance on large-deck carriers also stems from the fact that no other mix of ships can so effectively conduct such a variety and depth of combat missions.

Although the carrier battle group is criticized because of its cost, in reality, the lack of sufficient funds to equip the entire fleet with greater capabilities has forced the concentration of combat capability in large-deck carriers. The current US naval force structure was not bred out of ignorance. Rather, it resulted from a recognition that the modern aircraft carrier efficiently performs the roles of many less sophisticated platforms, achieving a force multiplication otherwise impossible. It is easy to criticize the cost,

## Maritime Theater Nuclear Capability

complexity, and apparent vulnerability of the large-deck carriers. However, no other platform so effectively provides the command and control, logistic support, and maintenance capability required by the varied missions the CVBG performs. For naval missions below the level of global, nuclear, superpower confrontation (most notably, conventional sea control and power projection) carrier battle groups have been and remain the most capable and potent naval forces afloat. Even in a direct superpower confrontation, if limited to nonnuclear weaponry, the US Navy would stand a good chance of winning the war at sea.

Several factors favor US naval forces in nonnuclear maritime warfare against the Soviet Navy. In open ocean areas, the superior conventional antisubmarine warfare (ASW) and antiair warfare (AAW) capabilities of US forces should provide the means to either hold down or destroy cruise missile platforms that threaten US surface forces. Any "leakers" escaping the outer US defenses will encounter the formidable inner, layered defenses. If properly combined with deception and electronic warfare (EW) tactics, the inner defense should degrade the attacking missiles' effectiveness, although some "leakers" certainly will penetrate the defenses and hit their targets. And as already mentioned, the Soviets will rapidly lose the ability to generate the complex, large-scale attacks required to engage these defenses. At the same time, an acknowledged Soviet inferiority in ASW will allow US submarine forces to disrupt Soviet strategy in choke point and sea denial areas. Both sides will suffer enormous losses in such a nonnuclear conflict. However, properly deployed, the majority of US naval forces will survive the initial mass cruise missile attacks, able to carry on the vital missions of SLOC control and power projection.<sup>12</sup>

Introduction of theater (tactical) nuclear weapons, however, appears to swing the advantage to the Soviet side. ASW and AAW efforts would still prevail against most of the incoming Soviet cruise missiles. But only one 125-kiloton nuclear-tipped "leaker" would destroy the warfighting capability of its target—even with detonation as far as 5,000 yards away. A high-altitude nuclear burst could severely degrade the CVBG command and control functions over a large area because of electromag-

netic pulse (EMP) effects.<sup>13</sup> Either way, because the US Navy's aircraft carriers are the keystone of all its sea control and power projection capability, the Soviets could achieve a "cheap" victory by concentrating large, coordinated attacks on a relatively small number of platforms (14 carriers).

To the extent that the US Navy has concentrated most of its firepower in the CVBGs the Soviets' task has been made easily definable: use weapons with a high probability of kill to neutralize the CVBGs, thus achieving a quick, decisive victory over US naval forces.<sup>14</sup> If this task is accomplished, the Allies would be unable to protect sea lines of communication. Soviet land forces would then have a much easier time in any Eurasian conflict.

Another particularly difficult potential problem for maritime defense planners is countering the use of theater ballistic missiles (such as the Soviet SS-20) against maritime surface forces. With good enough targeting data, a ballistic missile strike could effectively neutralize a surface force spread over a large area at a great distance from the launch point. To date, no viable defense exists or is in planning to counter such an attack. As in other aspects of maritime warfare, the US Navy, relying heavily on a few concentrations of surface platforms to accomplish a significant part of its maritime strategy, is more vulnerable to this threat than the Soviet Navy.

Although no specific evidence suggests that the Soviets intend to employ such tactics, their technological capability certainly permits them to do so. The major factor deterring the Soviets from launching such a ballistic missile attack may be their fear of misinterpretation: the United States could believe the attack was a major Soviet first strike against the United States and launch an unwanted retaliatory strike. In any case, a ballistic missile attack on naval surface forces appears, tactically at least, to present an insurmountable problem for the defending force. As targeting technology improves, or if the Soviets perceive an increased threat to their national strategy from Allied maritime forces, the chances for this type of attack would appear to increase.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly, the outcome of a maritime conflict would significantly affect the land campaign in a US-Soviet confrontation. The

### Maritime Theater Nuclear Capability

Soviet Union is primarily a land power; its navy exists to help implement the overall Soviet warfighting strategy on the Eurasian landmass. The United States, on the other hand, is primarily a maritime power; its navy is crucial to its national warfighting strategy. Whether a major military conflict between the superpowers were to occur on the Central European Plain, in the Middle East, in Southwest Asia, or in all three regions simultaneously, the Soviets would probably attempt to use their overwhelming advantage in force size to win a short land campaign. The Soviets would seek to end the conflict before the Allied forces could be reinforced and resupplied by sealift and airlift from the United States. Conversely, the Western nations, relying on timely reinforcement to match Soviet force size, must prevent a quick Soviet victory. The Allies must remain in the fight long enough to permit the previously mentioned logistic effort to alter the outcome to the West's advantage. The war at sea will help determine the success or failure of either side's warfighting strategy. The Western maritime nations must have control of sea lines of communication to prevail. The Soviets can win a short confrontation without prevailing at sea, but they must prevent an Allied sea-borne reinforcement to win a long-term conflict.

A European conflict has the gravest implications for US conduct of war at sea. As previously stated, it is far and away in the best interest of the United States for the maritime conflict to remain conventional. The US Navy's strategy therefore uses the concept of "linkage" in hopes of deterring use of nuclear weapons at sea: the Navy ties Soviet first use of nuclear weapons at sea to Allied introduction of such devices in the land battle (where the Navy hopes the Soviets perceive use of land-based theater nuclear weapons to be to their disadvantage.) On the other hand, because of the apparently overwhelming numerical advantage of Warsaw Pact forces vis-à-vis NATO in the land battle, NATO has enunciated the strategy of "flexible response." The flexible response strategy leaves open the option of a NATO "first use" of theater nuclear weapons to stem the Warsaw Pact advance into Western Europe until NATO reinforcements arrive.

The contradiction between these two policies is obvious. The US strategy seeks to deter Soviet escalation at sea by threatening

escalation in the land battle, yet the Allied land strategy stresses a readiness to escalate anyway. Given the Soviets' apparent lack of belief in nuclear escalation thresholds, the utility of the "linkage" concept is arguable anyway. Thus, a superpower confrontation begun in Central Europe would have disastrous consequences for US naval strategy. Because the "linkage" deterrent is not viable, the US Navy probably will become embroiled in MTNW, for which it is ill-prepared. It is apparent that the US Navy must augment its current force capabilities to respond properly to the threat. An operable strategy must realistically reflect actual capabilities at the present and be adaptive as long lead time equipment acquisitions come on line.

### UPGRADING US CAPABILITY\*

Long-term equipment acquisition programs fall into two general areas. First, naval offensive nuclear striking power must be improved. Second, fleet defensive capabilities must be upgraded.

Currently the US Navy's MTNW offensive strike capability relies solely on carrier-based attack aircraft delivering obsolescent gravity freefall weapons. These weapons match up poorly in terms of range, stand-off capability, and survivability when compared with the ubiquitous Soviet cruise missile threat. This weapons deficiency is added to the limitations involved with 100 percent of the nuclear strike assets being located on 14 platforms, and the attendant spectre of "cheap kill."<sup>10</sup>

The US Navy's offensive theater nuclear striking power, therefore, must be modernized and made more widespread. In some areas these improvements are already underway: Los Angeles-class attack submarines and DDG-51-class destroyers are

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\*Keep in mind that this discussion is specifically oriented toward maritime theater *nuclear* war. As previously stated, the US Navy's force capability and employment strategy change significantly when crossing the threshold from conventional to nuclear warfare.

### Maritime Theater Nuclear Capability

being outfitted with nuclear-tipped Tomahawk land-attack missiles (TLAM-N). At least two non-carrier surface action groups will be formed around the newly reactivated battleships *New Jersey* and *Idaho*. Both ships are Tomahawk-capable and will be fitted with all three versions of the missile (including TLAM-N).

As a third step, long-range, land-based aircraft (B-1s, B-52s, P-3s) should be equipped with an antiship version of a stand-off cruise weapon such as the air-launched cruise missile (ALCM).<sup>27</sup> This third step would be aimed at disrupting Soviet surface fleet activity in sea denial areas, relieving pressure on US forces, and degrading Soviet ASW efforts. Fourth, carrier-based aircraft must be equipped with state-of-the-art, long-range, stand-off weapons armed with conventional and nuclear warheads.

In general terms, these equipment acquisitions will make all US naval forces more survivable by multiplying, many times over, the Soviet offensive strike targeting and defensive tracking problem.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the threat of such ubiquitous nuclear striking power would help remove the incentive for the Soviets to go nuclear -- they would no longer enjoy such a decisive advantage in MTNW forces. Indeed, damage to the Soviet wartighting assets in MTNW might be greater than to US forces.

The US Navy should also take specific steps to upgrade the defensive capability of its fleet. Again, some of these improvements are already underway. First, all future ship design and construction should give a high priority to blast, EMP, and radiation hardening, and to improved systems survivability in general.<sup>29</sup> To date, the US Navy has done little in this area. Consequently, US naval forces are less survivable in the MTNW environment than Soviet forces.

Second, as a major adjunct to President Reagan's "Star Wars" program, the Navy should give the highest priority to ship-based directed energy defensive systems capable of destroying cruise missile warheads beyond the 10-20 nautical mile range. These systems would complement present outer air-battle defenses and help eliminate cruise missile "leakers." They would also improve lethality against incoming nuclear warheads.

## Maritime Theater Nuclear Capability

Soviet over-the-horizon targeting sensors should be placed at risk. Testing of antisatellite weapons to take out Electronic Intelligence Ocean Reconnaissance Satellite (EORSAT) and Radar Ocean Reconnaissance Satellite (RORSAT) systems will begin in 1984. This capability will take on increasing importance as Soviet space surveillance capability improves in the 1980s and 1990s.

Modernization of nuclear-armed defensive systems for anti-submarine and antiair warfare is being defined and reviewed. Among these improvements are the ASW Stand-Off Weapon (ASW SOW) to replace the aging submarine rocket (SUBROC) ASW weapon, and the nuclear-armed SM-2 air defense missile to replace the nuclear-armed Terrier. The utility of these systems is arguable because first use by the United States of any small-scale nuclear weapons of this type could lead to escalation, defeating the US Navy's strategy of holding a conflict at the conventional level. Use of these small-scale nuclear weapons would also risk escalation out of the theater to the strategic level. For these two reasons, the US National Command Authorities probably would not approve use of these systems. In any case, the advantage of such weapons lies at the tactical defensive level. The broader—and more crucial to US strategic interests—concept of deterring maritime nuclear warfare will remain fundamentally the same.

Another long-term acquisition program worth considering involves future sealift vessels. The importance of keeping open logistic resupply lines in an MTNW environment suggests some rethinking of the means to accomplish sea transits. The inherent cover of submersible ships and the current capability to build large-displacement submarines (such as *Ohio*-class SSBNs) lends credence to Captain Pease's idea of developing a submersible resupply fleet.<sup>21</sup> Such vessels would require less protection, would greatly simplify SLOC protection, and would be more in keeping with the survivability requirements for MTNW.

## REVISING US STRATEGY

In addition to modernizing its weapons and fleet, the US Navy needs to revise its strategy for theater nuclear warfare. Any



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revised strategy or plan must be based on two basic tenets. First, *resupply and reinforcement of the oversea land battle must be the Navy's number one priority.* The US national strategy requires successful supply support and reinforcement of its ground forces facing the Warsaw Pact. Failure to resupply and reinforce will surely lead to a military catastrophe. Therefore, the SLOC to the United States must be kept open. The only effective means for protecting the SLOC is the superior ASW and AAW capability of the carrier battle group. The CVBGs must be held out of high-threat areas so they can perform this most vital function.

Second, all evidence suggests that the Soviet Navy expects to use nuclear weapons, will find it overwhelmingly advantageous to do so, and will probably not be deterred from doing so, particularly if US land forces use them first. Thus, *any naval warfighting strategy must be based on the presumption that nuclear weapons will be used, not on the fervent (and unrealistic) hope that the conflict will stay at the conventional level.* In the near term, this presumption means entering Soviet sea denial areas primarily with nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) and, as they become available, long-range aircraft carrying conventional or nuclear antiship cruise missiles. Carrier battle groups must be held in reserve to protect sea lines of communication and be a backup tactical nuclear force, deployable to areas not covered by other services.

The US Navy must recognize the fallacy of deploying its CVBGs in the area of the most potent Soviet threat and, falsely assuming the Soviets will not use their extensive MTNW capability, expecting the CVBGs to survive. In fact, forward deployment of the CVBGs could force the Soviets over the nuclear threshold. The Soviets have correctly recognized that the carrier battle group is, for now, the only significant offensive naval threat with which they must contend. Given the historical Russian feeling about the sanctity of the homeland, the incursion of a CVBG within striking range of the Soviet Union could well trigger a Soviet nuclear strike against the CVBG—the very thing the US Navy must prevent.

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One aspect of the previously mentioned capability improvement program will most affect long-term strategy: proliferation of

#### Maritime Theater Nuclear Capability

offensive weaponry throughout the US Navy's fleet. Diversification of the Navy's offensive striking power will make it much harder for the Soviets to successfully execute their sea denial strategy. Soviet strike assets will be taxed much more attempting to cope with the larger number of US threat platforms.

Improved defensive capability, and survivability, of US forces should allow a more dynamic, multi-layered attack on Soviet naval forces—seeking ultimately to gain control of maritime areas adjacent to the Soviet Union. Power projection will have a renewed credibility in US naval strategy. US national strategy must continue, however, to stress the extreme importance of keeping open sea lines of communication, which would still require a large-scale, dedicated sea control effort.

The primary benefit from a diffusion of nuclear striking power throughout the fleet would be renewed credibility for the US Navy's stated policy of deterrence. The Soviets could undertake a maritime theater nuclear attack on US forces only with the frightening realization that the US Navy would be able to retaliate in kind—against not only maritime targets afloat, but also support and launch bases ashore. This capability would provide a true form of the "linkage" strategy the US Navy now espouses.

It is ironic that the United States' dependence on a strong navy for national security, natural for a maritime power, provides the mechanism for its defeat. The United States' critical reliance on seapower, coupled with the US Navy's lack of the resources required to fight across the full spectrum of maritime warfare, could ultimately be its downfall. The US Navy must change its fleet capabilities and strategy to return the United States to the position of comprehensive maritime superiority that has served national security interests so well in past conflicts.

3  
**PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS:**  
**A STRATEGIC VIEW**

by

Melvin E. Kriesel

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The formulation of national strategy is a four-dimensional process that seeks to gain maximum advantage from a nation's political, economic, psychological, and military powers in peace and war.<sup>1</sup> Strategists recognize that each power may be employed either independently or in combination with the others to achieve national objectives at any time or under any circumstances. Normally, it is difficult, if not impossible, to formulate a successful strategy that does not make concerted use of all four components of national power. Therefore, the strategist must attempt to find an appropriate balance between means and objectives in each instance.

US strategists are most successful at applying the nation's economic and military powers in support of national objectives. Economic and military powers can generally be understood and quantified in measures such as gross national product (GNP), natural resources, weapons production capacity, or standing military forces. The political dimensions of national power are more complex and not as easily quantified. However, there are well-developed conventions and diplomatic procedures that can be applied to international political affairs. For example, diplomacy can be used to keep potential enemies neutral or to establish alliances that counter an enemy's advantages. Of the four dimensions of national power, the psychological dimension is the least understood, the hardest to quantify, and the most difficult to effectively apply to national strategy.

Incorporating a psychological dimension into US strategy is exceedingly difficult. The psychological component is the least developed part of US national strategy. The inability to develop an effective means of integrating psychological activities into national strategy during peace and war is one of the central failures

## Strategic Psychological Operations

of US national strategy. Failure to effectively use the nation's psychological powers was a major factor in the ultimate failure in Vietnam. The same failure continues to plague US efforts to develop workable strategies that will secure vital US interests in the Middle East and Central America.

This essay examines the issue of incorporating the nation's psychological power into national strategy. I argue that a democracy can define acceptable "psychological measures" and specifically apply those measures to support its deployed military forces. I suggest a means for expanding the present ad hoc organization for controlling military Psychological Operations (PSYOP) to provide coordinated national-level PSYOP support to deployed military forces as well as operational guidance and leadership for PSYOP campaigns.

The United States needs a National Psychological Operations Committee to coordinate the nation's psychological operations resources to best support operation plans and crisis deployment of US forces. The committee will provide a mechanism at the national level of the US government to coordinate strategic psychological operations activities and plans on an interagency basis. If they are to be fully effective, psychological operations plans have to conform to national policy guidance and must be launched from the foundation laid by peacetime psychological efforts. Further, PSYOP plans must be supported by the full range of US psychological operations assets. These assets include Department of Defense (DOD) psychological warfare assets and the resources of other government agencies (United States Information Agency (USIA), Department of State, Agency for International Development (AID), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) when authorized by the president).

The lack of a national-level mechanism to effectively integrate psychological operations planning on a worldwide basis is only one part of the problem. Unfortunately, the strongly pejorative connotation of the term "propaganda" has complicated efforts to systematically analyze methods of applying US psychological power in support of national objectives. Many Americans reject the use of propaganda by government agencies to influence

attitudes and motivate behavior. US policymakers must overcome these prejudices and recognize that propaganda, like diplomacy or military operations, is a morally neutral force that can be used in a variety of ways to support the entire spectrum of foreign policy goals. (The Appendix contains a more detailed examination of the problem of propaganda in a democracy.)

### US PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

During periods of declared war, democracies have proven themselves remarkably capable of applying whatever force and means are necessary, to include the use of psychological warfare, to achieve final victory. In the early twentieth century, the US conception of propaganda clearly limited psychological warfare to the role of an auxiliary weapon in war. Indeed, psychological warfare was accepted in conventional American terms only when there was a war to be won.

Even though Americans generally acknowledge that psychological warfare is needed when the nation is threatened, they have been uncomfortable with the national-level organization necessary to conduct such operations. Americans have especially resisted any form of national-level organization for propaganda activities during peacetime. Yet, history is replete with examples of US shortfalls—confusion in organizations—inability to effectively counter an opponent's propaganda. (See the Appendix for an elaboration of this historical problem.)

After the Vietnam War there was an increasing awareness that the United States was running a poor second to the Soviet Union in the area of international communications. During the years immediately following the withdrawal of US forces from Southeast Asia, the United States allowed its informational and cultural apparatus to atrophy along with its ability to conduct military psychological operations. The "PSYOP community" sagged to its lowest point since World War II.

#### Administration Awareness

The general concern of a growing number of policymakers over the erosion of US informational capabilities resulted in

## Strategic Psychological Operations

various efforts to arrest the decline. Study of Soviet propaganda and disinformation programs became a growth industry in Congress during the late 1970s.<sup>3</sup> A number of official and unofficial studies were undertaken to examine the decline in funding for USIA cultural and informational programs. Other studies tried to identify the proper role of the USIA.<sup>4</sup> These studies, and the hearings that followed, produced an awareness in large sections of Congress and throughout Washington that something had to be done. When President Reagan took office in 1981, his administration was philosophically disposed to attack the problem. It not only resurrected the floundering USIA but also considered the entire information structure and moved forcefully to construct a national program that would address the entire issue of public diplomacy.<sup>5</sup>

From the outset, the Reagan administration recognized the importance of the psychological dimension as a key element of national strategy, acknowledging that "successful strategy must have diplomatic, political and informational components built on a foundation of military strength."<sup>6</sup> The administration chose "public diplomacy" as the means by which it would pursue a psychological strategy in support of national objectives.<sup>7</sup> It is attempting to develop public diplomacy into a comprehensive program that involves a complete range of informational and cultural activities designed to support all facets of national strategy.

The Reagan administration has failed to consider one important aspect of public diplomacy in designing its organization. The administration's program does not include a component for military psychological operations within its structure. Interagency coordination of psychological operations planning in anticipation of deployment of US military forces during a crisis is absolutely essential to US national strategy. Crisis action missions have tremendous psychological impact and generally involve the prestige as well as the credibility of the United States. Additionally, strategic international information programs can prepare foreign audiences in the objective or crisis area to assist US forces or at least remain neutral.

Equally important is the need to coordinate national-level support for the psychological operations plans prepared by the



Unified Commands to support their various operation plans. These psychological operations plans are strategic in scope. They must receive the coordinated support of all agencies if they are to be successful.

### **An Organization for Public Diplomacy**

One of the Reagan administration's first steps toward improving US informational capabilities recognized that public diplomacy was not the sole responsibility of the USIA. National Security Decision Directive 77 (NSDD-77), issued by President Reagan on 14 January 1983, created an interagency organization for public diplomacy.<sup>8</sup> The administration's emphasis on upgrading military forces and the issues surrounding "Reaganomics" have somewhat overshadowed the landmark nature of NSDD-77. Nonetheless, the directive represents the most comprehensive organization the United States has attempted since World War II to counter Soviet propaganda. NSDD-77 established a standing interagency group to develop coherent, worldwide informational and cultural activities designed to support national objectives. Figure 1 shows the structure of the organization.<sup>9</sup>

NSDD-77 recognizes that public diplomacy will have the best possibility of success only if the efforts of all agencies of the government are coordinated on a sustained basis. Previous ad hoc arrangements at the national level only loosely coordinated the efforts of the principal actors with roles to play in persuasive communications. The USIA, the National Security Council (NSC), the Department of State, the Department of Defense (DOD), the Agency for International Development (AID), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (when authorized by the president in special situations) seldom acted in a coordinated fashion to support the psychological dimension of US national strategy. NSDD-77 established a mechanism to achieve coordinated operation of the nation's psychological assets.

### **Special Planning Group**

A Special Planning Group (SPG) under the chairmanship of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs heads

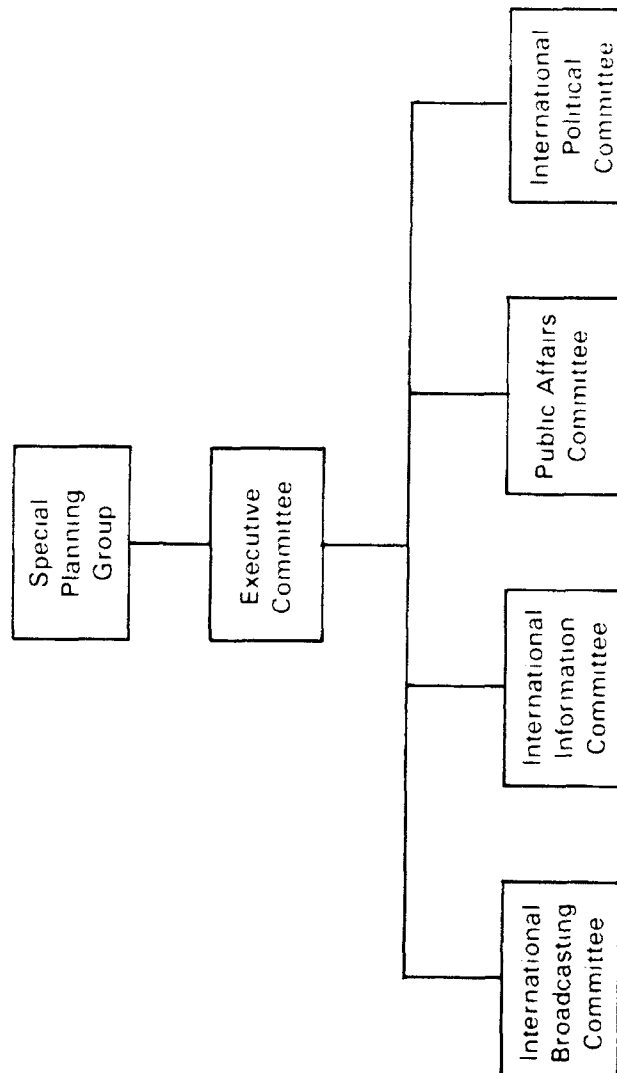


Figure 1  
Interagency Public Diplomacy Organization

the public diplomacy organization. The Special Planning Group is responsible for overall planning, direction, coordination, and monitoring of public diplomacy activities and implementation of programs. Direct access to the NSC gives public diplomacy planners in the SPG an important link to national policy as it is being formulated.

SPG members are the senior leaders of agencies that have traditionally played key roles in US persuasive communications. Members include the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of the USIA, the Director of the Agency for International Development, and the Assistant to the President for Communications.<sup>10</sup> The Chairman may invite other senior officials and representatives to attend SPG meetings when their agencies are needed or their interests are affected.

Four interagency standing committees report regularly to the Executive Committee of the Special Planning Group. These are the Public Affairs, International Political, International Information, and International Broadcasting Committees. The standing committees are authorized to establish working groups or task forces to deal with specific issues or programs.<sup>11</sup>

**Public Affairs Committee.** Creation of a Public Affairs Committee (PAC) reflects the need to explain US foreign policy initiatives and to gain domestic support for national security objectives. The Assistant to the President for Communications and the Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs co-chair the Public Affairs Committee. The committee plans and coordinates major speeches on national security subjects and other public appearances by senior officials. The Public Affairs Committee also plans and coordinates the domestic dimension of support for foreign policy.<sup>12</sup>

Previous administrations have also recognized the need to explain foreign policy initiatives more fully to domestic audiences and gauge public opinion as it relates to national security policy. A former head of the National Security Council observed that

foreign policy and domestic politics have become increasingly intertwined. The time when foreign policy could be viewed as

## Strategic Psychological Operations

an esoteric exercise by a few of the initiated is past. Today, the public at large, the mass media, the Congress, all insist on participating in the process, and that makes coordination at the highest level all the more important.<sup>13</sup>

The case of Central America presents a further example of the need to coordinate administration informational activities to support foreign policy. Public opinion polls indicate little understanding of the problems in that region within both the American public and international audiences. Surveys also show that the majority of the US public does not know which side the US government supports in the conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador.<sup>14</sup> The international media focus on poverty, social inequity, and abuse of power in Central America, seldom placing in proper perspective the role played by external intervention, especially by the *Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua*.

**International Political Committee.** The International Political Committee (IPC) coordinates and implements international political activities abroad in support of US policy.<sup>15</sup> It is chaired by a senior representative of the Department of State with a vice chairman who is a senior representative from the USIA. The committee faces several difficult, far-reaching challenges. It is responsible for building the US government capability to promote democracy abroad as outlined in a speech by the president in London on 8 June 1982.<sup>16</sup> The program, "Project Democracy," is intended to train young leaders in foreign societies. The program also attempts to foster democratic political institutions through education, scholarships, American studies, book programs, and other means; and to strengthen the institutions of democracy through work with labor unions, democratic political parties, media, and universities.<sup>17</sup>

**International Information Committee.** The International Information Committee (IIC) is chaired by a senior representative of the USIA with a vice chairman from the Department of State.<sup>18</sup> The IIC plans, coordinates, and implements international informational activities in support of US national security policies and interests. "Project Truth," a program launched in 1981 to portray

## Strategic Psychological Operations

abroad a more favorable image of the United States and to counter Soviet propaganda and disinformation, is within the IIC's purview. The IIC coordinates the informational strategies of other agencies and interagency working groups and makes recommendations in key policy areas. The committee also coordinates and monitors implementation of strategies for specific functional or geographic areas.

**International Broadcasting Committee.** The International Broadcasting Committee (IBC) is chaired by a representative of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Among its principal responsibilities are diplomatic and technical planning related to modernization of US international broadcasting capabilities and the development of antijamming strategies and techniques. The committee is also charged with developing long-term plans that consider the potential for direct television broadcasting.

## Military Psychological Operations

A major shortfall of the NSDD-77 organization is that it does not include military psychological operations within its organizational structure. Military psychological operations are used when higher levels of force than normal peacetime diplomacy are required to achieve national objectives. When military psychological operations become necessary, they must continue and build upon ongoing noncrisis or peacetime activity. To commence military PSYOP without considering previous peacetime themes is not logical, nor is it very smart if the United States wants to be perceived by a foreign target audience as being consistent, honest, and stable. The absence of that consideration prevents positive results. Additionally, because US military forces on crisis action missions need the support of psychological operations and the assets of all national-level agencies of our government, the absence of a national-level mechanism for coordinating psychological operations also has a negative impact on Unified Command contingency planning.

## US PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS IN ACTION—GRENADA

A crisis is defined as a situation that develops rapidly and creates a diplomatic, political, or military situation requiring the deployment of military forces to achieve national objectives. By their very nature, crises have immense psychological impact on world audiences and are generally accompanied by mass confusion and lack of information. Because of the fast pace at which crises develop, the Services have developed a well-defined Crisis Action System (CAS) to deploy the forces necessary to carry out decisions of the National Command Authorities (NCA). Although the system is very effective at deploying forces, it does not provide for consideration of the situation's psychological impact on world public opinion. This is left to chance.

The recent Grenada operation, "Urgent Fury," demonstrated the full capability of the CAS to assemble and deploy joint forces in an extremely short period of time. Unlike previous deployments, such as the Marines to Beirut, the Grenada operation included PSYOP forces from all Services. The role of PSYOP in the operation demonstrates PSYOP capabilities, but it also illustrates the need for a national-level coordination mechanism for PSYOP matters.

### Technical Proficiency

It quickly became apparent during Operation Urgent Fury that PSYOP would be a key factor in all communications with both enemy and friendly groups on Grenada. The operation demonstrated again that PSYOP is often the only means of mass communications a tactical commander has with both enemy and friendly groups in a combat area. Grenada's radio station was damaged on the first day of the operation. All other forms of communication were also disrupted. The only means of mass communication on the island became leaflets, posters, and PSYOP radio broadcasts by Army, Navy, and Air Force PSYOP forces.

The initial leaflets dropped during the assault phase of the operation were prepared by the Army's 4th PSYOP Group.

## Strategic Psychological Operations

printed aboard Navy ships, and dropped by Marine helicopters. These leaflets urged civilians to stay in their homes and advised them to tune their radios to the frequency on which the Air Force Coronet Solo (EC-130E aircraft) was broadcasting. Coronet Solo broadcasts kept the citizens informed during the peak combat periods and gave them guidance concerning safety measures they should take. On the second day of the operation, the Navy deployed its radio transmitter (AN ULT-3) to Grenada to augment the efforts of Coronet Solo and increase the broadcasting hours. Radio broadcast material was prepared by PSYOP specialists from the 4th PSYOP Group and broadcast using local Grenadian announcers. Music and tape recorded material from the Voice of America was used as "filler" programming.

The Army's principal PSYOP radio, a 50 KW transmitter (AN/TRT-22), was deployed when it became obvious that a larger radio was needed to cover the island. PSYOP personnel eventually prepared and broadcast 11 hours of programming per day. When hostilities ceased, responsibility for programming and broadcasting was turned over to the government of Grenada; US PSYOP personnel continued to provide operational and maintenance support. PSYOP elements kept the population of Grenada continuously informed and also directed extensive surrender appeals to Cuban forces and People's Revolutionary Army soldiers.

PSYOP units produced over 900,000 leaflets, handbills, and posters to support combat operations and subsequent consolidation operations. These were dropped to Cubans in remote areas, urging them to surrender. Other leaflet and poster campaigns announced amnesty programs, announced rewards for the turn-in of arms and ammunition, and provided information on hostile forces on the island. Both the radio broadcasts and the printed media were backed up by extensive use of loudspeaker teams, which operated with both combat forces and civil affairs teams.

### PSYOP Coordination

The PSYOP personnel on Operation Urgent Fury were technically proficient and skilled at identifying and communicating

## **Strategic Psychological Operations**

with key target groups. These personnel backed up their experience and ability with prudence and common sense regarding national-level policy and guidance. But they found it extremely difficult to determine the overall objectives of the operation and what the policy should be toward different groups. This difficulty caused delays during the planning of media campaigns on Grenada and caused some PSYOP efforts to be overtaken by events before a campaign could be mounted. A specific national-level mechanism to coordinate PSYOP themes with national objectives and information efforts would have made PSYOP campaigns and radio broadcasts much more effective. Additionally, such a mechanism would have assured that psychological operations were following national policy guidance for the operation.

At the outset of the deployment, PSYOP guidance was passed through normal channels to PSYOP forces, but there was no effective feedback for evaluating the effectiveness of operations in Grenada in relation to national information programs.

## **Strategic PSYOP Planning**

Although psychological operations conducted during the Grenada operation indicated significant strengths and valuable tactical capabilities, deficiencies in the tactical PSYOP organization also were evident. More must be done to improve planning and coordination in the area of strategic psychological operations. The operation plans of the Unified Commands incorporate psychological operations that can significantly affect the outcome of operations at the strategic level.

Unified Command PSYOP plans have been developed by psychological operations specialists from the 4th PSYOP Group at Fort Bragg working closely with PSYOP staff officers at Unified Command-level and below. These supporting PSYOP plans of the Unified Command carefully consider the PSYOP capabilities and assets of all relevant national agencies, particularly the Department of State, the USIA, and the CIA. But no interagency coordination to support these military plans takes place beyond that broadly specified in several bilateral memorandums of understanding between DOD and other agencies. No specific mechanism exists for effectively integrating the psychological



operations capabilities and plans of the military Services with those of the national-level agencies.

### NATIONAL PSYOP COORDINATION

The public diplomacy organization created by NSDD-77 began the process of supporting our national strategy with coordinated information programs. International informational, educational, and cultural programs have received particular emphasis. One additional step remains to be taken. The public diplomacy organization should incorporate an element that plans and coordinates the nation's psychological means to ensure continuity of PSYOP effort during the transition from peace to war, maximum PSYOP support of US objectives (political and military), and optimum support of deployed military forces.

This important aspect of the United States' foreign policy can no longer be ignored or left to chance. Psychological operations are a necessary part of US foreign policy when national interests are at stake, either in crises, in Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) operations such as those Central America, or in open conflict with an aggressor nation. PSYOP in these situations are absolutely essential, beyond ordinary public diplomacy mass communication techniques, and they must be coordinated and centrally directed.

I recommend that a National Committee for Psychological Operations be organized under the Public Diplomacy Special Planning Group, as shown in figure 2. This committee would provide a permanent institutional framework within which clearly defined and coordinated psychological operations policies and doctrine could be developed. The committee would provide a means for resolving long-standing interagency variances regarding PSYOP organization, doctrine, and strategy. Most importantly, a planning system for interagency coordination of psychological operations would finally be established at the national level.

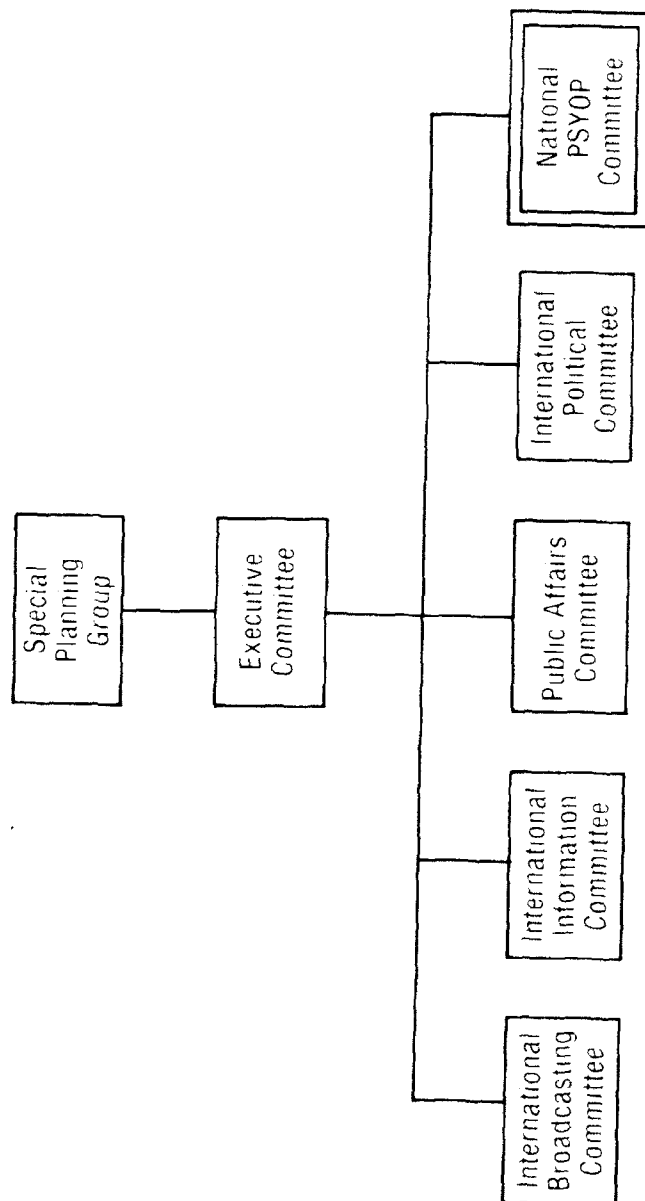


Figure 2  
Proposed Public Diplomacy Organization

### Organization of a National PSYOP Committee

A senior representative from the USIA should chair the recommended National PSYOP Committee (NPC). Precedent for this recommendation is contained in Executive Order 11522, which directs the USIA to develop plans to assist and support psychological operations. The order directs the USIA to

Participate in the development of policy with regard to the psychological aspects of defense and develop plans for assisting the appropriate agencies in the execution of psychological operations with special attention to overseas crisis short of war.<sup>21</sup>

The other members of the committee should be senior representatives from the Department of State, DOD, the CIA, and the NSC. State Department and NSC members would provide vital links to general guidance on US policy and objectives. The CIA should contribute to the committee as much as possible to derive full psychological benefit from the CIA's special missions and capabilities.

The mission of the National PSYOP Committee should be to achieve interagency planning, coordination, and management of national informational and psychological operations assets in support of military operations and contingencies. The committee should—

- Review and coordinate between government and military agencies all psychological operations plans.
- Provide ongoing psychological operations policy guidance through appropriate agency channels to operational elements.
- Establish programs to develop and improve psychological operations techniques and equipment for communicating with foreign audiences during military contingency operations or general war.
- Establish programs and policy for analyzing and countering psychological operations directed against US forces and populations.

## Strategic Psychological Operations

- Establish programs for cross-training between agencies to build a capability for integrated operations.

### PSYOP Interagency Group

An interagency group subordinate to the National PSYOP Committee should be established to provide staff assistance and to coordinate between national-level agencies. The first tasks this new interagency group should undertake are defining national psychological operations and doctrine, establishing procedures for formulating and integrating national psychological operations plans, and establishing a mechanism for coordinating the activities of the various agencies when US forces are deployed.

The interagency group should also review and staff the PSYOP support requirements identified by Unified Command PSYOP plans, including a review of psychological operations equipment and personnel available from all agencies to support PSYOP plans and activities. The interagency group should be empowered to make recommendations for improving PSYOP capabilities where shortfalls exist. When a crisis occurs, the interagency group should be responsible for PSYOP contingency planning and guidance to deployed PSYOP forces. To fulfill that responsibility, the group will need to develop concepts and procedures adapted to the Crisis Action System.

I recommend that the membership of the interagency group parallel the membership of the National PSYOP Committee, with the USIA providing the chairman. However, the vice chairman should be from the Joint Special Operations Agency (JSOA) organized on 1 January 1984 within the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The JSOA has a PSYOP branch within its organization, sufficiently manned and ideally suited to coordinate DOD PSYOP matters.

A National PSYOP Implementation Plan (NPIP), outlined in the Appendix, should be the basis for coordination of PSYOP resources and activity. National-level agencies would retain the NPIP as an approved PSYOP crisis or war plan once the inter-

agency group has completed staffing and coordination and the National PSYOP Committee has reviewed the plan.

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Many constraints act against the use of psychological means to achieve foreign policy objectives. Yet, if the United States is going to be successful in furthering its global interests while concurrently maintaining international peace and security, it must find a way to communicate with world audiences and gain support for its policies in the critical area of world public opinion.

The Reagan administration, recognizing that effective international communications are an essential factor in our peacetime strategy, has created a mechanism for developing and managing the national-level assets available to conduct effective psychological programs. However, the mechanism falls short of the mark. It does not address the transition *from peacetime to moments of crisis or all-out war*. Although the public diplomacy organization provides the interagency organization and continuity needed to develop coherent, worldwide information strategies, it does not provide a means for coordinating and integrating psychological operations conducted by the military; nor does it provide for support of a deployed military force.

A Psychological Operations Committee subordinate to the Special Planning Group is needed if the United States is to begin the interagency cooperation required to fully support national policy objectives and strategic military psychological operations plans. National-level coordination of Unified Command psychological operations plans is necessary to successfully and effectively integrate those plans into the core of US national strategy. The ultimate success of a Unified Command operational plan hinges on the reception US forces receive when they enter an operational area. Psychological operations can decisively influence the nature of this reception. To begin coordination of national PSYOP support when a military force commences deployment is to begin too late. Strategic psychological operations must precede the forces and prepare the area in advance. The planning and interagency coordination necessary to make these psychological operations successful must begin even earlier.

## Strategic Psychological Operations

When an unforeseen crisis does occur, a permanent Psychological Operations Committee would provide a means for rapid assessment and coordination of psychological operations supporting military activities. Well-conceived psychological operations during a crisis may, in fact, deter an adversary from following through on his actions before US forces are deployed. The potential for strategic psychological operations in most crises is limited only by imagination and lack of organization.

For psychological operations to be effective, our policymakers and agencies with PSYOP missions and functions must view their actions as a united whole. Without organizational direction that has a strategic focus, US psychological operations probably will never play an effective role in national strategy or become an integral part of our national security programs.

## APPENDIX

### A. THE INFORMATION CONTINUUM

We must establish "terms of reference" for discussing the psychological powers of a nation. Confusion over terminology probably has done more than any other single factor to hamper US efforts to harness America's psychological power and devise effective psychological programs.

The central feature of a nation's psychological power is the propaganda that it generates and transmits to either worldwide or selected foreign audiences. Propaganda and its functions can vary from general efforts designed to "tell America's story" to psychological warfare programs designed to destroy the morale of enemy soldiers, leaders, and citizens. Various terms describe this range of activities. Other terms describe programs that involve sophisticated target audience analysis and coordinated media events. Some students of the subject argue that "to distinguish exactly between propaganda and information is impossible."<sup>22</sup>

Many euphemisms (such as "persuasive communications" or "political advocacy") are used to describe propaganda in an attempt to disguise what is really being discussed. However, the euphemisms fail to hide the real subject and generally cause greater suspicion in those who feel that propaganda should not be used in a democracy. Additionally, a large number of terms from the "cold war" period have further complicated the language of propaganda.

Table 1 gives some idea of the bewildering lexicon that has developed in the field of psychological action. The table does not include all of the terms that have been used to describe propaganda. Instead, it provides a sampling of words commonly used during various periods over the last 30-40 years to describe propaganda, and shows the context within which these terms have

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**Table 1**  
**Range of Psychological Action**

Type of Action	Application			
	General War	Limited War	"Cold War"	Diplomatic Tension
Agitprop	X	X	X	X
Campaign of Truth			X	
Cold War			X	
Ideological Warfare			X	
Indirect Aggression			X	
International				
Communication				X
International Information				X
International				
Propaganda	X	X	X	X
Nerve Warfare	X	X	X	
Oversea Information			X	X
Perception Management				X
Political Advocacy				X
Political				
Communications				X
Political Warfare	X			
Propaganda	X	X	X	X
Propaganda Warfare	X	X		
Psychological Action	X	X	X	X
Psychological				
Operations	X	X	X	
Psychological Warfare	X	X		
Public Diplomacy				X
Public Opinion	X	X	X	X
Persuasive				
Communications				X
Thought War			X	
War for the Minds of Men			X	
War of Ideas			X	X
War of Words			X	

Source: Adapted from Roland I. Perusse, "Psychological Warfare Reappraised," in *A Psychological Warfare Casebook*, eds. William E. Daugherty and Morris Janowitz (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1958), pp. 25-26.



been applied. The number of terms from the cold war period is striking. Indeed, the cold war made the language, as well as the process, of propaganda a permanent feature of American government.

### Definition of Key Terms

In order to develop the basis for psychological initiatives designed to systematically support US foreign policies, a more precise (and uncompromisingly candid) application of terms is required. Therefore, it is useful to define key terms and how I apply them in this essay. The terms as defined—*public information*, *public diplomacy*, *psychological operations*, and *psychological warfare*—represent a continuum of control and manipulation of information. The continuum ranges from the comparatively benign aspect of peacetime public information to the drastic measures undertaken in psychological warfare. After defining the terms, I will describe an empirical model that suggests how a democratic government can apply each of these measures.

**Public information.** Information which is released or published for the primary purpose of keeping the public fully informed, thereby gaining their understanding and support.<sup>23</sup>

Public information is a form of propaganda in that it attempts, through organized persuasion and systematic use of information, to create trust and confidence within the general public. A term that is virtually synonymous with public information is public relations (PR). Public relations is the art "of using ideas and information through all available means of communication, to create a favorable climate of opinion for products, services, and the corporation itself."<sup>24</sup> In today's world PR has become an international phenomenon. Corporations spend vast sums of money to establish the best possible image for their companies and their products. This activity is identical, in most respects, to the propaganda governments generate in their public information efforts.

Although most Americans accept the often blatant exaggeration and "hype" of commercial PR experts, they react with suspicion and antipathy toward similar efforts by their government to

## Strategic Psychological Operations

forcefully gain domestic support for its "products and services." The public resistance to government "PR" stems in part from concern that those controlling the output of public information will abuse the power of their offices for partisan political purposes. There is also great concern and resistance whenever government public information agencies are used to vigorously build consensus or gain public support for large increases in the defense budget or an unpopular treaty. Few written guidelines exist in this area. Generally, a free press and a watchful Congress have raised storm warnings when government public information agencies have transcended the bounds of acceptable political behavior.

**Public diplomacy.** The use of international information programs together with cultural exchanges to create ideas and attitudes which support foreign policy and national goals. It includes international political activities used in conjunction with information, cultural and educational programs to develop democratic infrastructures. A public affairs component is used to explain foreign policy initiatives and programs to the general public and gain their support.<sup>25</sup>

Public diplomacy represents a distinctly American approach to propaganda. The concept of public diplomacy is a recent one that began to find acceptance in the 1970s. A precise definition of the concept and the activities it encompasses is still being developed. Public diplomacy's most distinguishing characteristic is that it addresses people rather than governments. Broadly stated, "Public diplomacy complements and reinforces traditional government-to-government diplomacy by seeking to communicate with peoples of other nations."<sup>26</sup> It encompasses both informational and cultural activities used by the government to gain foreign and domestic acceptance of and support for its policies and national security objectives.

Public diplomacy entails a high degree of information coordination and a broad application of mass communication techniques to achieve desired ends. It recognizes that all diplomacy is concerned with international competition. It is concerned with the management of conflict and operates in situations of diplomatic tension short of formally declared war. Public diplomacy recognizes the role of opinion and ideas in international conflict and

uses mass communications to gain acceptance of foreign policy and national security objectives.

**Psychological operations.** These operations include psychological warfare and in addition, encompass those political, military, economic, and ideological actions planned and conducted to create in neutral or friendly foreign groups the emotions, attitudes, or behavior to support the achievement of national objectives.<sup>2</sup>

This definition of psychological operations is unfortunate. The term was first used in 1945 and adopted by the Army in 1957.<sup>28</sup> In the context of the cold war the Army was more comfortable with the term "psychological operations" than with the more blunt, less flexible term, "psychological warfare." "Psychological operations" was added to the lexicon of the cold war, "indicating a recognition that such operations do not require a formal state of war and that they are not directed solely against enemies."<sup>29</sup>

The present definition seems to imply that its use against "neutral or friendly groups" is a relatively routine occurrence. The inclusion of "psychological warfare" among the actions encompassed by psychological operations can appear to imply that this form of "warfare" is an adjunct to psychological operations that can be directed at neutral and friendly, as well as at hostile, foreign groups. Little wonder that many US citizens become concerned when forceful arguments are made concerning the need for coordinated psychological operations programs to support national security objectives. One can legitimately ask, "Why do we need to target friendly groups, especially during peacetime, with a weapons system?" It is a difficult question to answer.

This is not to suggest a more restrictive definition of psychological operations, although one is certainly needed to define more accurately the actual "target." Rather, we must use the term only when referring to the process of communication in conflict situations that require military force.

Psychological operations can be viewed as a logical accompanying form of communications during a transition from policies

## Strategic Psychological Operations

employing diplomatic methods of persuasion to those including the application of more forcetful methods. The employment of psychological operations should be considered when public diplomacy and other diplomatic activities have proven unsuccessful in securing vital national security objectives. Psychological operations cannot substitute for military force; they can be employed either independently from military action or in support of military activities. When used to support military operations, psychological operations must be integrated closely with other related aspects of national policy. The use of psychological operations in this context is "a continuation of political activity by other means."<sup>30</sup>

**Psychological warfare.** The planned use of propaganda and other psychological actions having the primary purpose of influencing the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of hostile foreign groups in such a way as to support the achievement of national objectives.<sup>31</sup>

Psychological warfare is concerned with hostile targets in wartime. Loose application of the term in situations such as the ideological struggle of the cold war or to dramatize the propaganda campaigns of the United States and the USSR causes ambiguity. Psychological warfare is a highly constrained, directly controlled means of attacking the enemy's main forces as well as his civilian support base. Yet, even when dealing with a combat target, only a part of the psychological warfare effort is directed toward creating confusion, fear, panic, and similar negative conditions.

Quite as much, if not more, effort is made to communicate credible news, to reason with, to persuade, to convince the enemy you regard him as an intelligent human being who, given half a chance, would clean house and establish a decent government for his country. . . .<sup>32</sup>

Clausewitz wrote, "The conduct of war, in its great outlines, is therefore policy itself, which takes up the sword in place of the pen. . . ." <sup>33</sup> Employed during a declared emergency or war, psychological warfare attempts to enhance the effectiveness of the

"sword" by attacking the will of enemy military and civil forces. It uses the communications power of the "pen" as a more benign instrument for bettering war. In fact, both the Hague and Geneva Conventions recognized psychological warfare as one of the few completely legitimate weapons which can be, on occasion, directed against an exclusively civilian or noncombatant target.<sup>34</sup> Psychological warfare gives the commander a humane means of communicating with the enemy population even when planning the destruction of the enemy's fighting base and attacking his will to resist.

### Transition to War

Psychological actions cover a spectrum from comparatively low to greater levels of control and force, just as international conflict itself covers a spectrum that ranges from peace through periods of heightened tension and limited war to, in extreme cases, general war. General war represents "the upper extremity of a whole scale of international conflict of ascending intensity and scope."<sup>35</sup> Along this scale nations attempt to assert their will through military and nonmilitary means as their policy and political objectives come into conflict with those of other nations. A similar scale can be applied to psychological actions used to support national security strategies.

I will use the terms defined previously—public information, public diplomacy, psychological operations, and psychological warfare—to illustrate the levels of control over information at each point on the spectrum. Figure 3 represents the levels of control over information that are required as conflict increases and more drastic psychological methods are employed. At the low end of the spectrum, during peacetime, democracies demand information that is relatively free from manipulation and control. Normal public information activity by government agencies is accepted as long as the information is "honest and true" and does not attempt to mask obvious discrepancies or to deceive.

At the next level, public diplomacy is used to generate support for foreign policy initiatives and to reinforce the impact of these initiatives on foreign groups. Public diplomacy attempts to create a climate of domestic opinion in which the nation's policies

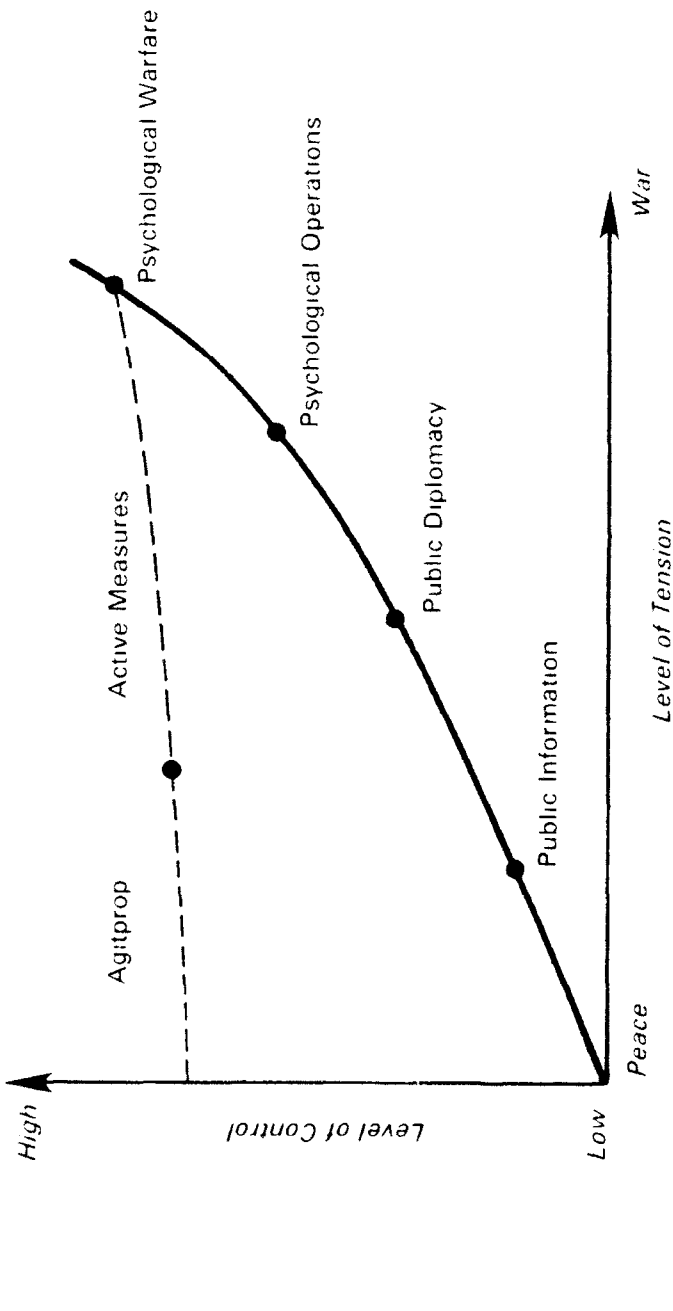


Figure 3

Levels of Information Control

can be formulated and executed. Public diplomacy is "organized persuasion" in that the informational efforts of major government agencies are coordinated to achieve the best possible effect.

When diplomacy and other political means are no longer sufficient to achieve national objectives, higher levels of force may be applied to achieve foreign policy goals. However, when applying measures of force to achieve its goals, a nation normally does not discontinue all forms of international communications. Both military and psychological means can be applied in a coordinated, directed fashion, and with increasing intensity, to gain an objective. The use of psychological operations represents an increase in the level of control over information, and it frequently, although not necessarily, accompanies the threat or use of military force.

Psychological operations are most often employed during peacetime to support military forces deployed on crisis action missions (peacekeeping missions, hostage rescue missions, military assistance missions) and during civic action and consolidation operations (reestablishing or building democratic infrastructure) following periods of unconventional warfare or general war. Psychological operations can be employed in situations short of general war to secure limited war objectives.

The "operational" connotation implicit in the term "psychological operations" suggests that high levels of planning and coordination are necessary to achieve desired ends. This, in fact, is true of both psychological operations and psychological warfare. Within the military establishment, staff officers develop plans that integrate the assets available to military commanders to support operational goals. Similar plans for employing civilian psychological operations assets, or for integrating civilian and military psychological initiatives, are not nearly so common. This lack of planning for civilian psychological action creates the potential for ineffectiveness or inconsistency in the nation's overall psychological operations.

Psychological warfare involves the greatest degree of control over information and generally is instituted only at the highest end of the conflict spectrum, to support the nation's war effort. Psychological warfare includes "warfare psychologically waged"

## Strategic Psychological Operations

and other measures designed to attack and destroy the enemy's will to resist. In this context, psychological warfare is employed almost exclusively during periods of general or declared war or in special situations where use of military force is authorized by the president.

### Communist Information Control

The careful distinctions I have just made regarding the use by a democracy of psychological methods to secure national objectives do not apply equally in a communist system. One observes fewer gradations or levels of control in a communist system than in a democracy. The essence of a communist system lies in its absolute control of information. The level of control over all information, both foreign and domestic, within a communist system is extremely high. (See figure 3.) Propaganda is used extensively to indoctrinate communist leadership and cadre, and agitation and slogans are used to mobilize the people for revolution. This activity, known as "Agitprop," is directed against both foreign and internal audiences during both peace and war. It is backed up by a full range of "active measures" that are integrated into a cohesive mechanism of propaganda and covert action.<sup>36</sup>

Both the volume of Soviet propaganda and the level of control exerted in its application far exceed those of Western democracies. This is true across the entire spectrum of conflict, short of general war.

What sets the Soviet propaganda machine apart from all other nations' efforts—especially the desultory ones in the West—is not only its use as a weapons system with equal rank to the other instruments of strategy, but its ubiquitous and tight integration into virtually all Soviet activities on the global stage, including both their overt and covert dimensions. Indeed, the massiveness of the Soviet effort and its orchestration at the top render it a misnomer to speak of US "propaganda" forces in any kind of equivalent sense.<sup>37</sup>

### Target Audience

A part of the confusion in trying to define propaganda terminology concerns the target of these propaganda activities. Table 2



## Strategic Psychological Operations

shows the target audiences of the types of propaganda activities previously discussed. Psychological warfare is directed primarily against an enemy during periods of general war. Psychological operations are a more benign means of influencing hostile, neutral, and friendly foreign audiences. A portion of public diplomacy is directed toward domestic audiences, while the majority of this effort is directed toward foreign audiences affected by the policies involved. Public affairs activity includes information intended for both domestic audiences and foreign audiences across the entire spectrum.

**Table 2**  
**Targets of Propaganda**

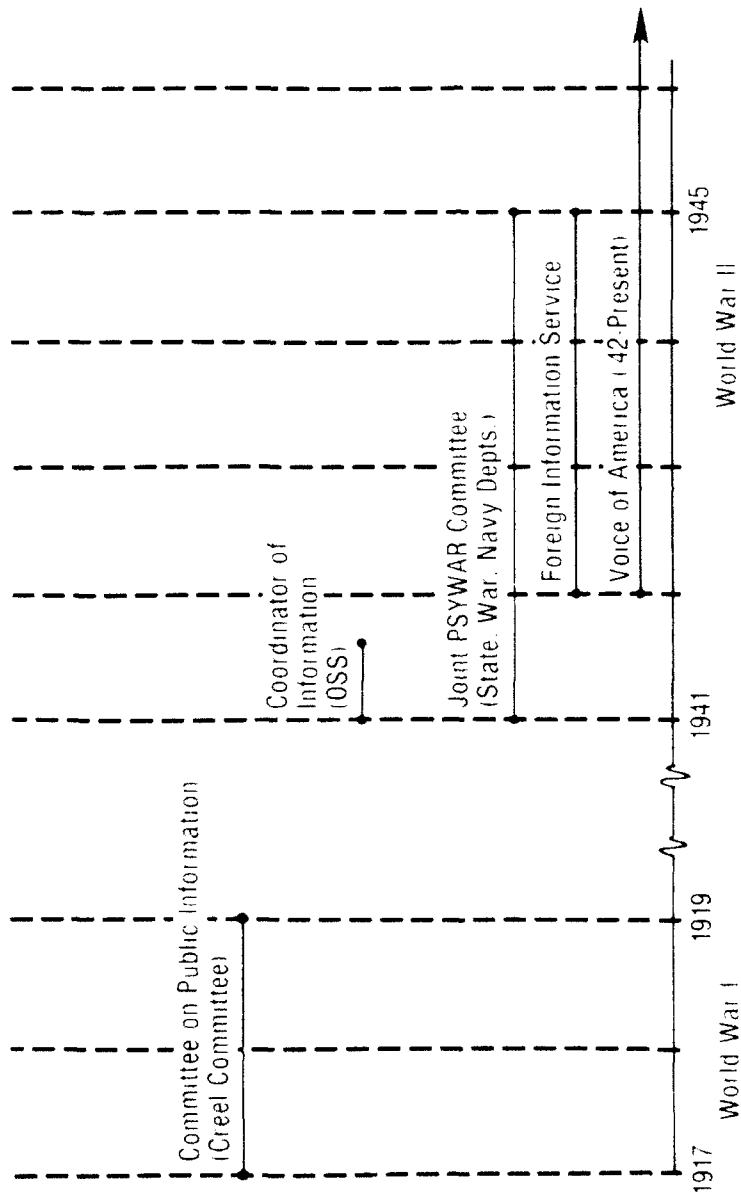
<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Target Audience</i>			
	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Allied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Enemy</i>
Public Affairs	XX	XX	XX	XX
Public Diplomacy	X	XX	XX	XX
Psychological Operations		X	XX	XX
Psychological Warfare				XX

XX—Primary Target  
X—Secondary Target

## B. NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### Wartime Organizations

The earliest attempts to coordinate US informational strategy occurred during World War I and World War II. (See figure 4.) The Creel Committee (Committee on Public Information) of World War I was the nation's first, and perhaps most successful, national organization for propaganda, although it went to great pains to avoid the "stigma" of the word propaganda.<sup>38</sup> The committee was composed of the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy and was headed by George Creel, a personal friend of President Wilson. The Committee played a major role in making President Wilson and the US war aims known throughout the world. Its representatives established and supervised tactical leaflet



**Figure 4**  
**National Coordination Organizations**  
**During the World Wars**

## Strategic Psychological Operations

operations and conducted surrender appeals directed at enemy soldiers.

Unfortunately, the Creel Committee was never able to transfer the considerable skill acquired in international information programs into a domestic organization. Nor was the Committee able to establish an organization within the military that would have given the United States a military psychological warfare organization at the outset of World War II. Congress abolished the Creel Committee immediately after the war.

When the United States entered World War II, President Roosevelt quickly established an office to conduct psychological warfare. The Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) was organized in 1941 as a comprehensive organization for psychological warfare. President Roosevelt later transformed the COI into the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).<sup>39</sup> The Office of War Information (OWI), under Elmer Davis, superseded the COI in 1942 as the US agency chiefly responsible for psychological warfare strategy during World War II. The Office of War Information picked up other "bits and pieces" of propaganda machinery that had been previously established, such as the Voice of America, which was organized earlier that same year.<sup>40</sup> Although the Office of War Information had some notable successes, particularly in the Italian campaigns, it was never able to realize its full potential. A major OWI shortfall was the lack of any direct link to policy at the national level. An OWI official wrote after the war that although "Americans attained considerable skill in the use of propaganda as an instrument of war, they failed completely to develop the arts of persuasion as an instrument of foreign policy."<sup>41</sup>

Tactically, psychological warfare was widely applied in all theaters of operation. The success of these operations convinced General Eisenhower

that the expenditure of men and money in wielding the spoken and written word was an important contributing factor in undermining the enemy's will to resist and supporting the fighting morale of our potential allies in the occupied countries.<sup>42</sup>

## Cold War Period

Congress and the Bureau of the Budget attempted to completely disband the OWI organization at the end of World War II. But Joseph Stalin's intransigence during the period that began the cold war halted the disestablishment of the US wartime organization. Drawing from the experience and, to a large extent, the staff of the Office of War Information, the United States created the US Information Agency (USIA). The transformation of the OWI into the USIA saw offensive strategies of wartime informational policy and the language of psychological warfare applied to "peacetime propaganda." The unabashed, assertive, and strident propaganda of US international diplomacy during these early years of the cold war was difficult to distinguish from that used during World War II.

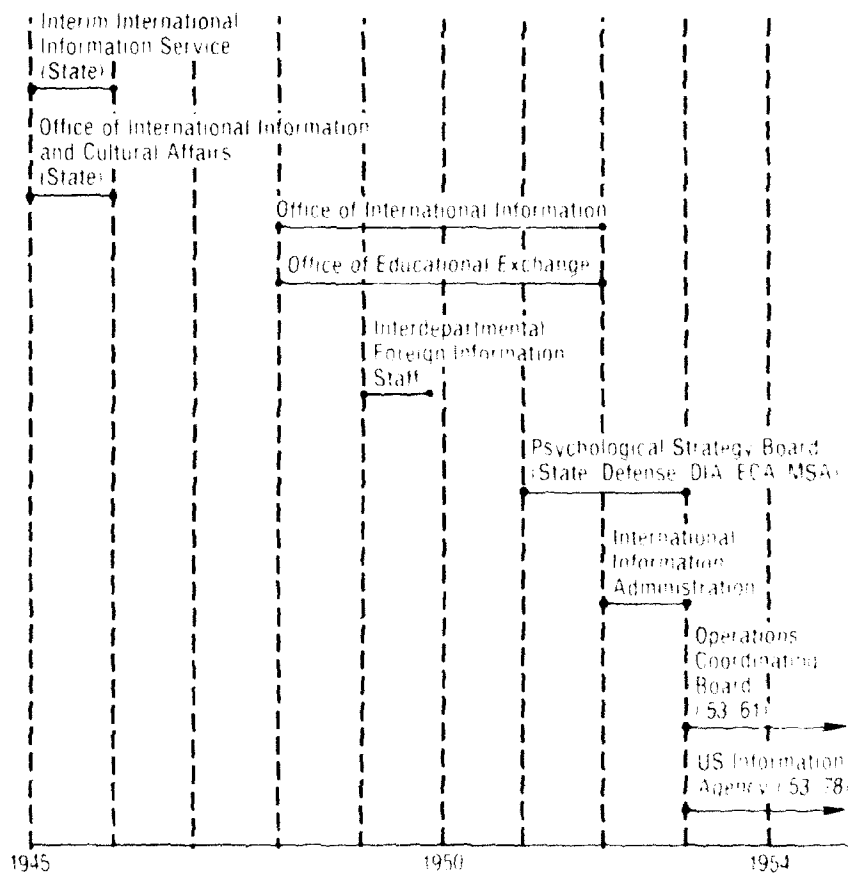
The metamorphosis of the US wartime propaganda apparatus to a peacetime one faced opposition. Many seriously doubted that the United States should have a propaganda organization at all. Others were anxious to shed the "PSYWAR" image of US information efforts. The key issue and question was, Are American information and cultural activities supposed to support and act as an arm of American policy, or should they perform the more benign function of promoting mutual and reciprocal understanding abroad through the use of educational and cultural exchanges?

Also at issue was the means of controlling and planning the use of propaganda to support policy. The organizations and reorganizations during the period between World War II and the Vietnam War, shown in figure 5, indicate the confusion over roles and functions for US informational activities.

No permanent solution was found to the problem of organizing the information programs of the various US government agencies. One critic of this lack of overall coordination observed that

our propaganda assumes a posture of independence, pursues its own intermediate course and then, with guilty opportunism, seeks to share the approbation accorded a diplomatic success while disclaiming responsibility for failure.<sup>13</sup>

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**Figure 5**

**National Coordination Organizations  
During the Cold War Period**

## Strategic Psychological Operations

Throughout the cold war period, both the Truman and the Eisenhower administrations tried to devise realistic mechanisms for coordinating all international information programs, and apply them to support diplomatic and foreign policies. None of the organizations that emerged was able to achieve the necessary coordination. A pattern emerged during these years, typifying US efforts to incorporate a psychological dimension into its national strategy. The United States permitted, if not encouraged,

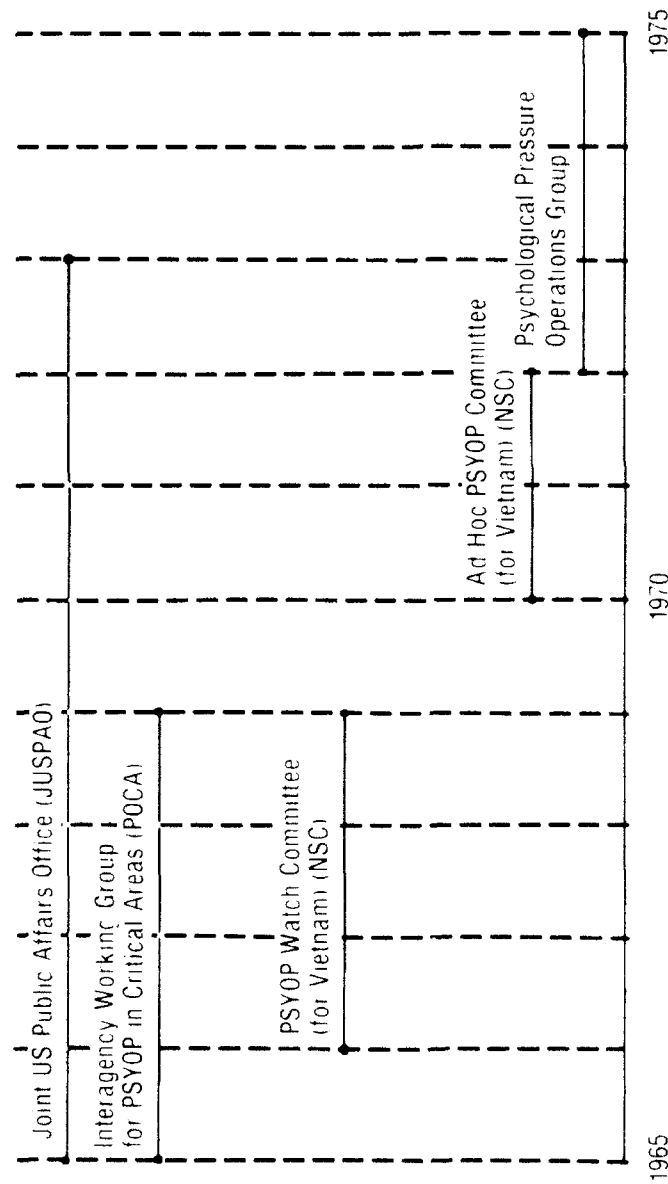
the growth of parallel instrumentalities, arguing that the integrity of each must be preserved. Yet the results (were) absurdly impractical. It is as though two woodsmen, one equipped with an ax, the other with a saw, undertook to cut down a tree working simultaneously at different levels.<sup>44</sup>

## Vietnam War Period

Challenged by the Vietnam War, the United States again tried to produce a comprehensive organization to coordinate US propaganda activities. This effort produced a series of reorganizations similar to those at the height of the cold war, as shown in figure 6.

From the outset, the psychological dimension was generally recognized as the critical factor in the conflict.<sup>45</sup> The United States hoped that a coherent policy and coordinated, centrally controlled execution would produce programs capable of gaining the support of the Vietnamese people. Planners realized that no government program could succeed without the support of the population. The Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), established in Saigon in 1965, took on the task of achieving a coordinated approach to "winning the hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese people. The office was organized and principally staffed by the USIA. Its mission was to provide centralized planning, direction, and control for all psychological operations in the Republic of Vietnam.

The efforts of the JUSPAO and the USIA were hampered from the beginning by issues that persist to this day. The first concerned the argument over the proper role of the USIA. From the outset there were many officers in the JUSPAO who argued that



**Figure 6**  
National Coordination Organizations  
During the Vietnam War Period

## Strategic Psychological Operations

the USIA's role should be "purely informational." This group thought that the efforts of the USIA should concentrate on bilateral and international relations. At the other end of the spectrum were those who firmly believed the USIA should be in charge of all aspects of informational policy, to include psychological operations.<sup>46</sup> The "propaganda versus information" issue caused dissension not only within the USIA but also throughout the government.

The second issue concerned the lack of a national-level mechanism to coordinate a unified and consistent PSYOP program that would both link the efforts of the JUSPAO to overall government policy and orchestrate support from all government agencies involved in the war effort. The ad hoc approach to solving this problem produced a series of organizations, none of which proved entirely successful. The Interagency Working Group for PSYOP in Critical Areas, the National Security Council Ad Hoc PSYOP Committee, and the Psychological Pressure Operations Group all attempted to coordinate psychological policy for Vietnam. No permanent standing committee with "a seat at the policymakers' table" was ever established to address the strategic psychological dimensions of US national strategy in Vietnam.

PSYOP declined sharply at the end of the Vietnam War. Military PSYOP organizations virtually ceased to exist within most senior levels of the US military establishment. The Army's regular PSYOP forces were drawn down to one (understrength) PSYOP Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The USIA entered a period of general decline, with virtually every aspect of US informational programs being significantly reduced from 1970 to 1980.<sup>47</sup>

### The Soviet PSYOP Threat

In direct contrast to the decline in US PSYOP and international information capabilities from 1970 to 1980, the Soviets dramatically increased their propaganda effort in size and scope during the same period. The Soviets mounted a major propaganda offensive throughout the world, outspending the United States by 7 to 1 in international broadcasting and informational



efforts.<sup>48</sup> They devoted massive resources to propaganda and cultural diplomacy, all directly linked to supporting their long-range policy goals. By 1982, estimates placed Soviet spending for propaganda and disinformation activities at more than \$3.3 billion per year.<sup>49</sup>

The Soviets have developed a wide variety of assets to enable them to operate effectively in diverse audience environments. They continue to emphasize radio broadcasting above other methods in their multimedia approach to propaganda. Scholarships and other cultural exchanges are another important medium and can illustrate how the Soviet Union links its psychological operations efforts to its overall policy. In 1980 there were 327 students from the Caribbean Basin in the United States on government-funded scholarships. In contrast, there were 2,300 students from the region studying in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries; an additional 3,500 students were studying in Cuba. In 1982, the figure for Cuba jumped to almost 7,000 students. Table 3 compares the numbers of students from areas of strategic interest that were funded for training in the United States and the Soviet Bloc during 1980-81.<sup>50</sup> Soviet-funded scholarships can indicate Soviet interest in an area, as well as instability in that area.

**Table 3**  
**Foreign Students in the Soviet Bloc**  
**vs**  
**in the United States**

<i>Nation of Origin</i>	<i>Attending in United States</i>	<i>Attending in Soviet Bloc</i>
Algeria	0	2,900
Cyprus	10	1,650
Madagascar	2	2,565
Nicaragua, Ecuador, and El Salvador	112	1,605
Panama	47	1,140

The Soviet Union also coordinates its propaganda efforts with similar efforts of communist parties in other nations. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) International

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Department maintains liaison with at least 70 foreign communist parties. These parties, as well as international front groups and "national liberation" movements, all disseminate Soviet propaganda. Propaganda produced in these various efforts is mutually supportive and reinforcing.

The CPSU has centralized control over all propaganda directed at both domestic and foreign audiences. The Politburo determines PSYOP objectives and the Secretariat supervises operations. The International Information Department of the CPSU is the directing center of all Soviet propaganda efforts. The specific content of Soviet propaganda changes in accordance with shifting international issues, however, its objectives are consistent:

- To weaken the opponents of the USSR.
- To create a favorable environment for advancing Moscow's views and international objectives.<sup>51</sup>

The multitude of propaganda documents discovered in Grenada demonstrates how propaganda supports and enhances paramilitary action. Although the Marxists and their Soviet and Cuban advisers had not been able to completely solidify their control in Grenada, they had already introduced Marxist-Leninist propaganda into primary schools and adult education programs. Unions, mass organizations such as the National Women's Organization and the National Youth Organization, and the media had adopted and were saturating the island with Soviet- and Cuban-inspired rhetoric. A similar process has taken place in Nicaragua, Afghanistan, and Angola, or wherever Soviet interests are directed. This effort is reinforced by a well-organized and effectively run apparatus for propaganda and covert action that includes Tass and Novosti bureaus and correspondents in over 100 countries and KGB intelligence officers working under journalistic cover.<sup>52</sup>

Many will debate the effectiveness of Soviet propaganda. Admittedly, the communists suffer and will continue to suffer from the inflexibility of their methods. The content of much of their propaganda is strident and heavy-handed. Additionally, Soviet media output often features unsubstantiated accusations

and misinformation. "The Soviet authorities apparently think that they can achieve credibility with foreign audiences by carefully blending and then repeating a combination of fact, distortion, and outright falsehood."<sup>53</sup> Despite these shortcomings, the direct link to foreign policy mechanisms and careful coordination with diplomacy and paramilitary action gives Soviet propaganda a definite forcefulness, particularly in underdeveloped areas of the world. The massive amount of Soviet propaganda directed at selected areas of the world indicates an apparent Soviet belief that, in propaganda, quantity at some point becomes quality. Certainly, quantity by itself is often as effective as quality in shaping the attitudes of relatively unsophisticated audiences in both developed and underdeveloped regions of the world.

### C. NATIONAL PSYOP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A major problem of national PSYOP coordination has been the lack of plans that concisely state overall requirements. Each agency plans its informational programs in a vacuum with minimal interagency planning. The United States must adopt a National PSYOP Implementation Plan (NPIP) as a base document to use for interagency coordination of PSYOP support for Unified Command PSYOP plans and of PSYOP requirements in a crisis.

The Unified Command is an ideal level to begin identifying requirements and planning for PSYOP support during crises and general war. The Unified Command can be a vital bridge between military psychological operations and national strategy and policy. I propose that the PSYOP staff of each Unified Command, in conjunction with the 4th PSYOP Group, prepare an NPIP for each of its operational plans. The NPIPs will identify the national-level resources and support that the Unified Command will need to carry out psychological operations during wartime and especially during the critical transition from peace to war.

Each agency that will support the Unified Command should retain copies of the National PSYOP Implementation Plan as war plans. Similar Crisis Action Implementation Plans should be

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prepared for possible contingencies, based on intelligence estimates and regional threats.

The NPIP should contain five standardized annexes:

*Annex 1—Analysis of Operational Area.* Contains a psychological operations analysis prepared by trained analysts from the Strategic Studies Detachments (SSDs) of the 4th PSYOP Group. The SSDs perform this type of analysis daily when they prepare basic PSYOP studies and assessments for the Department of Defense and the PSYOP community. These studies provide a detailed analysis of all those factors expected to have a psychological effect on the area of operations or area of interest. For example, an NPIP prepared to support US internal defense and development efforts in Central America would assess all psychological factors in the region, including Soviet and Cuban information programs.

*Annex 2—National Information Objectives.* Provides broad statements of national information objectives that national information programs and military psychological operations are to support. National policy is the guiding factor in all information and PSYOP programs.

*Annex 3—Target Audiences.* Specifies target audiences, based on operational plans and national objectives. Each target audience is analyzed and assessed to determine the psychological operations objectives necessary to support national objectives.

*Annex 4—Implementing Strategy.* Proposes information and media campaigns in drafts for coordination among national agencies. The strategy considers all aspects of mass communications and seeks to gain international as well as local support for US actions. Enemy forces are targeted by all means available, including national assets.

*Annex 5—Coordinating Instructions.* Identifies detailed informational and material resources required to support the overall PSYOP plan, beginning with coordination of the resources required to accomplish the psychological objectives of the plan, and assigns responsibility for each objective. The success of a national information plan will be directly related to the degree of coordination achieved at the national level.

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## Psychological Operations

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